



This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE TREATMENT OF THE
INDUSTRIAL AND URBAN WORKING CLASSES IN
BRITISH PROSE FICTION, 1832 - 1914

EVELYN CAROL MILES

THESIS PRESENTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KEELE FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DECEMBER 1975

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
NOTE	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I : THE WORKING CLASSES AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT (I)	12
CHAPTER II : THE WORKING CLASSES AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT (II)	41
CHAPTER III : WORKING-CLASS COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE	94
CHAPTER IV : INTER-CLASS PERSONAL RELATION- SHIPS	139
CHAPTER V : WORKING-CLASS PROSTITUTES	183
CHAPTER VI : WORKING CONDITIONS AND LABOUR RELATIONS	206
CHAPTER VII : WORKING MEN AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS	295
CONCLUSION	347
APPENDIX I	359
II	366
III	367
IV	372
BIBLIOGRAPHY	378

ABSTRACT

This study of attitudes to and the presentation of the industrial and urban working classes in prose fiction written between 1832 and 1914 begins with two chapters on the urban environment. The first, which concentrates on books written before 1880, examines treatments of the working-class response to two aspects of urban life:- the physical hardships of slum life; and the emotional and spiritual impact of the large scale and anonymity of the urban environment. The main issue to arise is the balance of moralistic and compassionate attitudes. The second chapter looks at the continuing debate about physical conditions, in fiction written after 1880; at the emergence of interest in the cultural environment of the working classes; and at the application of notions of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. Chapters three and four examine the degree of sensitivity attributed to working-class characters in their courtship and marriage relationships, and in inter-class marriages and personal relationships, including those in which a working-class girl is seduced by someone of higher social standing. The fifth chapter begins with an account of the fictional presentation of the lives and characters of working-class girls, who become prostitutes, and develops into a treatment of the moral conventions which emerge. An examination of the treatment of the effects on workers of conditions in factories forms the first part of chapter six. It is followed by an analysis of the ways in which several novelists present trade unions; and the chapter concludes with a study of working conditions

and labour relations in workshops and "sweated trades". The final chapter deals with the political attitudes and activities of working men. It concentrates on the characterization of working-class political leaders, and relates this to the writers' attitudes to the political movements involved.

NOTE.

Some explanation may be thought necessary for a study whose subject appears closely to duplicate that of P.J. Keating's The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction. This book was published in 1971, after work on the thesis had begun. I have found some of Dr. Keating's definitions and distinctions useful in my own research; and, particularly in discussion of the Cockney School, some of my observations are close to his. However, I have examined prose fiction written over a rather longer period of time; I have used a different principle of organization, with more extensive reference to historical sources; and I have attempted to relate authors to one another topically.

In footnote references I have indicated when novels were first published serially but reserved full details for the Bibliography, where I have also specified the date of first publication in book form. Details of first publication of short stories have been given in the footnotes.

I have used standard editions for quotations from the works of major writers such as Ruskin and Carlyle. When I have quoted from a number of novels by one author I have tried to use the same edition, though in some cases, notably that of Gissing, there is no such edition to go to. The Bibliography includes, as well as details of first publication of novels and short stories, a reference to the edition which has been used for quotations.

INTRODUCTION

Professor Asa Briggs begins his essay 'The Language of "Class" in Early Nineteenth-Century England'⁽¹⁾ by tracing the origin of the concept of class to the large-scale economic and social changes of the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The notion and language of class became well established in an economic context as a result of their use by influential political economists, including Ricardo, who associated classes with the economic relations of a developing industrial society when he defined political economy as "'an enquiry into the laws which determine the division of the produce of industry amongst the classes who concur in its formation'".⁽²⁾ Although there was in Victorian Britain a continuing tradition of paternalism in social relations,⁽³⁾ the word "class" was used to identify a relationship less personal and less strongly imbued with notions of the responsibility of the higher for the lower orders of society than that associated with the terms "ranks and orders". In a passage in 'Chartism' (1839) distinguishing the "old Aristocracy" from the new, Carlyle wrote:

-
- (1) In Essays in Labour History, edited by Asa Briggs and John Saville (London, 1960), pp. 43-73.
 - (2) David Ricardo, 'On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation' in Works and Correspondence, edited by P. Sraffa (Cambridge, 1951) 1, 6. The reference is to the 1962 edition and is quoted by Harold Perkin in The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1800 (London, 1967), p. 27.
 - (3) Two examples of this are Christian Socialism and the East End Settlements Movement.

Yet we do say that the old Aristocracy were the governors of the Lower Classes, the guides of the Lower Classes; and even, at bottom, that they existed as an Aristocracy because they were found adequate for that. Not by Charity - Balls and Soup - Kitchens; not so; far otherwise! But it was their happiness that, in struggling for their own objects, they had to govern the Lower Classes, even in this sense of governing. For, in one word, Cash Payment had not then grown to be the universal sole nexus of man to man; it was something other than money that the high then expected from the low. Not as buyer and seller alone, of land or what else it might be, but in many senses still as soldier and captain, as clansman and head, as loyal subject and guiding king, was the low related to the high. With the supreme triumph of Cash, a changed time has entered; there must a changed Aristocracy enter. (1)

Whatever formula was used to distinguish economic groups, the working class was being presented as a discrete group by the early years of the nineteenth century. The first known use of the term "working classes" is Robert Owen's in 1813, in his 'Essay on the Formation of Character' (later, A New View of Society). In his 'Address to the Sovereign' printed in The Crisis on 4th August 1832 Owen contrasted a "union of the government, aristocracy and non-producers" with "the Industrious Classes"⁽²⁾; but a three-fold division was more common⁽³⁾: for example,

-
- (1) Thomas Carlyle, 'Chartism' (Boston, 1838; London, 1839) in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays vol. IV. Reference to the Centenary edition (London, 1896-9), vol. XXIX, pp. 162-3. (All subsequent refs will be to this edition).
- (2) Robert Owen, 'Address to the Sovereign' in The Crisis, 4th August 1832, quoted by Briggs, op. cit., p. 50.
- (3) I do not wish to imply that the three-fold divisions in the examples to be cited are exact equivalents.

Carlyle's "workers", "master workers" and "master idlers"⁽¹⁾; Arnold's "aristocracy", "middle class" and "working class"⁽²⁾.

In his address 'To the British Master Manufacturers', Owen defines the working class simply as "those whom we employ as operatives in our various manufactures".⁽³⁾ However, the term "working classes" acquired political connotations during the Chartist agitations of the 1830s and 1840s: the language of class became the language of injustices and rights, the expression of a developing class-consciousness among the workers. Harold Perkin, in The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, writes of class in terms not only of position in the economic structure but also of ideals by which classes were identifiable. The working-class ideal is summed up in the sentence:

Its ideal citizen was the productive, independent worker, and its ideal society an equalitarian one based on labour and co-operation.⁽⁴⁾

The effect of economic status meeting class ideals at the point of day-to-day living constitutes a class culture; and class in this sense, of a cultural as well as an economic group, is rich in the variety and complexity of its

(1) Carlyle, Past and Present (Boston, 1843; London, 1845); Centenary edition, Vol. X, p. 1.

(2) Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (London, 1869), pp. 134-5.

(3) Owen, 'To the British Master Manufacturers', New Lanark March 30th 1818. Reproduced in Robert Owen A New View of Society and Other Writings, (London, 1927) p. 140.

(4) Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880 (London, 1969), p. 231.

manifestations. Non-fictional books like Thomas Wright's Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes (1867), dwell upon the cultural aspect of working-class life; and it is very important in fictional treatments of the subject.

In this study I shall use the term "working classes" in preference to the singular form in order to give some sense of the multiplicity of occupational sub-groups and of the social hierarchy within working-class life. Occupational groups include skilled artisans, such as watchmakers and cabinet-makers; factory-workers of both sexes, skilled and unskilled; the depressed class of workers employed in the sweated trades; and street-traders such as flower-sellers and costermongers. Although these street-traders served middle-class as well as working-class customers, their physical and cultural environment was London's "mean streets" or poorest slums. The same applies to the proprietors of small shops in working-class areas: although their economic status was different from that of the manual workers whose families they supplied, they belonged culturally to the workers' environment. Those on the lowest rung of the social ladder — prostitutes, thieves and beggars — were mainly of working-class origins and I shall incorporate some fictional material about them in this survey. However, I have not dealt with books primarily about domestic servants because many were relatively isolated from other members of the working classes, and because they frequently imbibed some of the attitudes of those whom they served. Nor as the title indicates,

do agricultural workers come within the terms of reference. Although there was poverty among, and exploitation of workers in country as well as town, and the countryside was affected by the Industrial Revolution and urban growth⁽¹⁾, the basic pattern of relations in rural life was that which had obtained in the eighteenth century, whereas in industrial villages, towns and cities the survival of relations like those of rural life is noteworthy because it represents a movement against the general flow. In the title I have used the words "urban" and "industrial" to define two categories of worker: the term "urban" refers to workers who lived in towns but were not necessarily employed in factory industries; and the word "industrial" takes in workers whose environment was the village rather than the town but whose economic status and social relations were those of industrialism. Into this category come miners, many of whom lived in villages; but they formed part of the collectivity called Labour which battled against the collectivity called Capital; and the mining industry made a vital contribution to the process of industrialization.

I have chosen 1832 as the starting point because it marks an important stage in the establishment of the

(1) By, for example, the exodus of rural labourers and the expansion of markets for country produce. such as the milk from Talbothays in Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891).

positions of the social classes in relation to one another. After 1832 there was a difference in political motivation between the working and the middle classes: they had been drawn together by the agitation for parliamentary reform but there is evidence that the working classes continued to feel dissatisfied with their political position.

Harold Perkin writes:

In brief, Reform was at first feared by the aristocracy as destructive of both pillars of their ideal, but they later came to distinguish between Reformers who wished to abolish property and those who were as determined as they to preserve it. They were thus able to save the main pillar, property, by sacrificing the secondary one, patronage. And they were able to do this because in the main middle-class ideal capital was compatible with property while competition was inimical to patronage. The resulting compromise successfully split the Reformers, and stalled off further Reform until it was 'safe', that is, until the working-class ideal had exhausted, at least for the time being, its revolutionary opposition to property and capital, and the middle-class ideal had so permeated the bulk of the population that capital and property were no longer in danger (1) from democracy.

I have chosen to take the survey to 1914 because major social changes come not in 1901 nor at the end of Edward VII's reign but after the 1914-18 war. Among the changes, social and political, which followed or resulted from the first World War were the accelerated emancipation of women, the achievement of complete adult male suffrage, the decline of the Liberal and the rise of the Labour Party, the stimulation of new industries, and a new impetus for

(1) Perkin, op. cit., p. 310.

developments in secondary education, for which provision had been made in Balfour's Act of 1902.⁽¹⁾ Significantly, the final volume of the Oxford History of England deals with a period beginning in 1914, and its author, A.J.P. Taylor, provides a rationale for this in the opening chapter:

Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state, beyond the post office and the policeman...

All this was changed by the impact of the Great War. The mass of the people became, for the first time, active citizens. Their lives were shaped by orders from above; they were required to serve the state instead of pursuing exclusively their own affairs... The state established a hold over its citizens which, though relaxed in peacetime, was never to be removed and which the second World war (2) was again to increase.

The fiction written about working-class life during the period between 1832 and 1914 includes novels and short stories by acknowledged major writers and by a large number of lesser known ones. Although much of this material seems poor in literary value, it is useful in an examination of attitudes. Some novels and stories seem to merit the label "realistic", others to be more appropriately described as "romantic". In the romances improbabilities abound, and poverty, crime and squalor are accepted as colourful backgrounds to the narratives. These are written to a formula of mystery, surprise and sensationalism such as

(1) Balfour's Act abolished school boards and made county and county borough councils the local authorities for all secondary and technical education.

(2) A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 1-2.

characterizes, for example, James Greenwood's Jerry Jacksmith of Lower London (1890). Unlike realistic treatments of working-class life these books reflect no zeal for accuracy nor for informed social comment, and their contribution to this study will be small. However, they have been taken into consideration, partly because even a series of romance stereotypes sometimes throws light on attitudes to a particular subject, partly because it is difficult to draw a clear line between realism and romance in nineteenth-century fiction about working-class life: Greenwood's novel Fair Phyllis of Lavendar Wharf (1890) is sub-titled "A realistic romance". Novels written between 1832 and 1914 about a historical period earlier than that of the post-Reform era have not generally been studied⁽¹⁾, but much valuable material has been found in "documentary" writing of the period such as autobiographies of working men⁽²⁾, popular works of social comment⁽³⁾, and propagandist tracts.⁽⁴⁾

The breadth of this survey clearly presents problems of selection and organization. The literature of economic, social and political history and of the thought and culture of the period is vast and must be read selectively. However, changes in the physical and cultural

(1) An exception is Mark Rutherford's The Revolution in Tanner's Lane (1887).

(2) The Autobiography of Thomas Cooper (1872). The Life and Struggles of William Lovett (1876).

(3) Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes (1867).

(4) The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (1883).

The books mentioned in notes 2-4 are merely examples.

realities of working-class life during these eighty years should be taken into account before conclusions are drawn about the attitudes of particular authors. The advantages of looking at fiction over a long period are that a broader range of attitudes will emerge; that some will emerge more clearly; and that it is possible to see developments and changes of emphasis. Generally in such an investigation as I am undertaking the "wholeness" of a book has to be destroyed so that its component parts may be fitted into the overall picture. However, the parts are seen initially in the context of the whole and interpreted accordingly; so a sense of the whole should not be lost.

The material will be described and analysed under headings which refer to aspects of working-class life rather than to authors or types of novel: the working classes and the urban environment, courtship and marriage, inter-class personal relationships, prostitution, work and labour relations, and the working classes and political actions and attitudes. Although some over-lapping results from this arrangement, there is often a concentration of interest in one of these areas in particular novels; and each aspect generates its own issues. In novels which deal primarily with industrial relations, such as Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton (1848) and North and South (1854-1855), the fictional debate raises the question of how far the interests of masters and men are identical. Of novels in which personal relationships are important, such as Gissing's Thyrza (1887), it is pertinent to ask how far

working-class characters are presented as sensitive and capable of experiencing the deepest satisfaction, of love, friendship and marriage.

Although the subject-matter of each chapter will raise specific issues, a number of broad questions will provide the basis for analysis in the survey as a whole. These include the following:

- (i) Are the working-class characters presented collectively or individually? If collectively, what kind of collective image is stamped on them, and what function is performed in the book by this collectivity?
- (ii) What types of working-class character are portrayed, and how representative are they claimed to be?
- (iii) How convincing is the portrayal of a working-class character? This entails making a subjective judgement, but it may be tested by the evidence of historical material, where relevant and available, by comparison with other fictional characters, or by the criterion of consistency within a novel or short story.
- (iv) What is the relationship between working-class characters and their environment?

- (v) How far are working-class characters presented in narrow class terms? In examining this it will be necessary to consider, for example, how far a character is judged by standards which are applied by the author to the working-classes only; how far a character's attitudes and behaviour are attributed to class origins; and how far the work of fiction makes class relations, particularly class conflicts, central.
- (vi) What qualities of working-class characters are presented approvingly and disapprovingly? What does this reflect about the author's values?
- (vii) Are there any broad chronological changes in treatment throughout the period?
- (viii) Do any individual writers dominate the fictional treatment of working-class life? If so, how?

CHAPTER ITHE WORKING CLASSES AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT: I⁽¹⁾

It seems appropriate to begin this study with an examination of the fictional treatment of the physical environment of the urban working classes. I shall deal with this subject in two chapters, the first concentrating on novels and stories written before 1880, the second on those written between 1880 and 1914, though this boundary may occasionally be overstepped. Although there is some overlapping, there are differences of preoccupation and response between writers of the first and those of the second period, and division into two chapters therefore seems justifiable. In the earlier period there is a wider range of geographical locations. These include, in the works of major novelists, Manchester in Helen Fleetwood (1841) and Mary Barton (1848), The Black Country in Sybil (1845) and The Old Curiosity Shop (1841-42), and several districts of London in Alton Locke and Dickens' novels. Preoccupations of this mid-nineteenth-century group of novelists include the emotional impact of urban

(1) Fictional treatments of workhouse life will be discussed in Appendix I.

living generally, and conditions in slums⁽¹⁾: they wrote at length about the physical circumstances of slum-dwellers. The date 1880 has been chosen as a watershed for two reasons: it is the year of the publication of the first novel about working-class life by Gissing⁽²⁾ who dominates the fictional treatment of working-class life in late-Victorian England and whose attitudes are strikingly different from those of his christian-humanitarian predecessors, including Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens; and it was the beginning of a decade in which the attention of many individuals and organizations was directed towards the East End, particularly to the mores and supposed

-
- (1) H.J. Dyos deals with the origin and early development of the word "slums" in his article 'The Slums of Victorian London' (Victorian Studies, September 1967). He finds that, by 1821, the word was being used to refer to "low, unfrequented" houses and districts in town and country, and that by 1845, it was being applied to bad housing generally, but that for many years after this it was used as a semi-slang expression and written inside inverted commas. He concludes:

What was being overlooked, I think, before "slum" was properly coined was the existence of a housing problem — itself not normally referred to as such until nearly the end of the century — as distinct from one of sanitation or public health. (P.9)

Not all slum-dwellers were working class, but it is reasonable to assume, for the purpose of discussion in these two chapters, that most of them were.

- (2) Workers in the Dawn.

cultural deprivation of its inhabitants.⁽¹⁾ The phenomenon of the "discovery" of the East End is reflected in the fiction of the period, notably Walter Besant's All Sorts and Conditions of Men (1882) and Children of Gibeon (1886). Jack London's The People of the Abyss (1903) ensured that interest in East London was carried into the new century.

Although experience of the aura of the city is a continuing source of interest to writers about urban life, London and expanding industrial towns in the Midlands and North provided a totally unfamiliar environment for many thousands in the mid-nineteenth century: it is not surprising, therefore, to find explicit comment in the work of novelists of the period about the impact of urban life on the spirit, some of it related specifically to the working classes. I shall look briefly at examples of this from the work of Mrs. Gaskell, Kingsley, Disraeli and Dickens, and I hope to discover (1) the responses attributed by these authors to working-class characters and

(1) The following events are evidence of the surge of interest in the East End:

- (a) 1885: the opening of Toynbee Hall, the aim of which was to help people of the East End to enjoy a richer cultural life.
- (b) 1886: Charles Booth's initial investigation into life in the East End, the findings of which were published in 1889 as Life and Labour of the People.
- (c) 1887: the opening of the People's Palace by Queen Victoria. This was intended to provide working people with the means of recreation and self-expression.

(ii) the extent to which they are seen to share these responses with town-dwellers from other social classes. Most of the chapter, however, will be devoted to an examination of the fictional treatment of slum life. I shall try to identify (i) the kinds of conditions portrayed and the extent to which improbable, rare or extreme circumstances are used and (ii) attitudes to these slum conditions and to the working-class response to them.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CITY

In The Road to Wigan Pier (1937) George Orwell wrote:

London is a sort of whirlpool which draws derelict people towards it, and it is so vast that life (1) there is solitary and anonymous.

A century before this was written, authors were trying to express a sense of the size of London and other large urban centres, and of the feeling of anonymity large towns and cities aroused in residents and visitors. In a passage in Dombey and Son describing the destruction of Staggs's Gardens to make way for a railway, Dickens evokes, with a touch of sadness, the loss of human scale:

Staggs's Gardens...was a little row of houses, with little squalid patches of ground before them, fenced off with old doors, barrel staves, scraps of tarpaulin, and dead bushes; with bottomless tin kettles and exhausted iron fenders, thrust into the gaps. Here, the Staggs's

(1) George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier (London, 1937), p. 79.

Gardeners trained scarlet beans, kept fowls and rabbits, erected rotten summer-houses (one was an old boat), dried clothes, and smoked pipes...Staggs's Gardens was regarded by its population as a sacred grove not to (1) be withered by Railroads...

This is not sentimentality: Dickens perceives that people need to live in an environment which is both familiar and an extension of the self. However, it is clear from Dickens' picture of the circumstances of the Toodles family after the railway has been built that he recognizes some benefits in the coming of the railway: the family is comfortably housed and Mr. Toodles has a secure job. Dickens' choice of a working-class setting for his account of the effects of the coming of the railways suggests the powerlessness of this social class.

The city and the industrial town may lack humanity in other ways: their size and the pace of life in them may foster indifference to others and its corollary, a

-
- (1) Charles Dickens, Dombey and Son (London, 1846-48), ch. vi.
 Some early nineteenth-century folk songs express sadness because familiar landmarks in growing towns and cities were disappearing. This is the theme of a song written in 1828, 'I can't find Brummagem'.
 Full twenty years and more have passed
 Since I left Brummagem,
 But I set out for home at last
 To good old Brummagem;
 But every place is altered so,
 There's hardly a single place I know,
 Which fills my heart with grief and woe,
 For I can't find Brummagem.

(James Dobbs, 1828. Quoted in A Touch on the Times, edited by Roy Palmer, Harmondsworth, 1974, p.78. There was also a version of this song relating to Coventry.)

feeling of anonymity, even in familiar surroundings. (1)
 John Barton regards as strangers people he encounters in
 the streets of Manchester when he looks for a druggist
 who might give him medical advice about Davenport:

It is a pretty sight to walk through a street with lighted shops; the gas is so brilliant, the display of goods so much more vividly shown than by day, and of all shops a druggist's looks the most like the tales of our childhood, from Aladdin's garden of enchanted fruits to the charming Rosamond with her purple jar. No such associations had Barton; yet he felt the contrast between the well-filled, well-lighted shops and the dim gloomy cellar, and it made him moody that such contrasts should exist. They are the mysterious problem of life to more than him. He wondered if any in all the hurrying crowd, had come from such a house of mourning. He thought they all looked joyous, and he was angry with them. But he could not, you cannot, read the lot of those who daily pass you by in the street. How do you know the wild romances of their lives; the trials, the temptations they are even now enduring, resisting, sinking under?...Errands of mercy — errands of sin — did you ever think where all the thousands of (2) people you daily meet are bound?

-
- (1) Little Nell and her grandfather are disconcerted by the bustling indifference of people in the Midlands industrial town through which they pass, and the unfamiliarity of their surroundings intensifies their sense of isolation. (Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop, London, 1841-42, ch. xlv.).
 An East End vicar wrote in Episodes in an Obscure Life (London, 1871):

Londoners have the character of being conceited, but in no place in the world — of course I am speaking of the mass of its inhabitants — is the individuality of a man of less consequence than in London. (P. 237).

- (2) Mrs. E. Gaskell, Mary Barton (London, 1848), ch.vi.

This is a complex passage, In presenting the generalized experience, as opposed to Barton's individual response, Mrs. Gaskell implies that, at a superficial level, it may be exhilarating. Although she evokes the atmosphere of the city street by means of a reference to the hurrying crowd, as Kingsley does, her images are less dismal than Kingsley's "ceaseless stream of pale, hard faces, intent on gain, or brooding over woe".⁽¹⁾ As James Thomson does, she sees the individual as an isolated figure in the crowded city because he is cut off mentally and emotionally from his fellow-citizens; but the experience of isolation is less frightening than that evoked by Thomson in 'City of Dreadful Night', where silence and stillness accompany it.⁽²⁾ However, there is something disturbing in Mrs. Gaskell's account: ignorance about the lives of people merely seen in city street may easily develop into insensitivity.

(1) Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke (London, 1850), ch.ix.

(2) In section I of 'City of Dreadful Night', published in the National Reformer, March to May, 1874, Thomson wrote:

The street-lamps burn amidst the baleful glooms,
 Amidst the soundless solitudes immense
 Of ranged mansions dark and still as tombs.
 The silence which benumbs or strains the sense
 Fulfils with awe the soul's despair unweeping:
 Myriads of habitants are ever sleeping,
 Or dead, or fled from nameless pestilence!

Although Thomson's poem expresses a state of mind, and residence in the city is not literal but symbolic, representing man's sojourn on earth, he drew upon his own response to life in London for some of the images used in this poem. Imogen Walker discusses the connection between the poem and Thomson's life in James Thomson ('B.V.') A Critical Study (Cornell Ithaca, 1950), ch.iii.

Although she presents with understanding John Barton's need to impose meaning on the flux, Mrs. Gaskell perceives how easily he may fall into misapprehension by using the only lights he has to guide him, his own circumstances and powers of awareness, which fix his attention on the contrast between poverty and wealth. The contrast has particular bite because the wealth is that of the master manufacturers and the poverty that of their employees. The passage taken as a whole reflects the subtle mixture of sympathy and detachment with which Mrs. Gaskell deals with this working man's reactions to the experience of the city.⁽¹⁾

Kingsley and Disraeli also contribute fictional impressions of the social fragmentation of the city, a quality which is the basis of Morley's description, in Sybil, of the city as "aggregation" rather than community. He does not claim that aggregation is peculiar to cities, but he does suggest that it is likely to be intensified in an urban environment:

"A density of population implies a severer struggle for existence, and a consequent repulsion of elements brought into too close contact. In

-
- (1) Another danger in the sense of anonymity induced by city life is perceived by John Whiteing, whose narrator in No. 5 John Street (1899) finds it difficult to retain his self-respect when he loses his job during a short, exploratory stay in a London slum:

The awful moral loneliness of the life takes "the heart of a man" out of me. Self-respect, I find, is still but the eclecticism of the respect of others...It is so plain that nobody in all multitudinous London cares whether I get work or fail to get it, that I soon cease to care on my own account. (Ch.xi).

great cities men are brought together by the desire of gain. They are not in a stage of co-operation, but of isolation, as to the making of fortunes; and for all the rest they are careless of neighbours. Christianity teaches us to love our neighbours as ourself; (1) modern society acknowledges no neighbour".

The clearest illustration in the novel of the concept of aggregation is the town of Wodgate, which has grown randomly:

No wages can tempt the Wodgate man from his native home, that squatters' seat which soon assumed the form of a large village, and then in turn soon expanded into a town, and at the present moment numbers its population by swarming thousands, lodged in the most miserable tenements in the most hideous borough in the ugliest country in (2) the world.

As a result it lacks any of the outward expressions, and indeed the actual forms of community life. Its ills are attributed not to bad landlordism but to no landlordism at all. Negativity is its essence:

There are no landlords, head-lessees, main-masters, or butties in Wodgate. No church there has yet raised its spire; and, as if the jealous spirit of Woden still haunted his ancient temple, even the conventicle scarcely dares show its humble front in some obscure corner. There is no municipality, no magistrate; there are no local acts, no vestries, no schools of any kind. The streets are never cleaned; every man lights his own house; (3) nor does anyone know anything except his business.

Kingsley's analysis has a different centre: in the city the pervasive spirit of competition filters through all levels of society and works against the development of

(1) Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil (London, 1845), book II, ch.v.

(2) Ibid., book III, ch.iv.

(3) Ibid.

a spirit of community. The city is characterized by "crime and poverty, all-devouring competition, and hopeless struggles against Mammon and Moloch, amid the roar of wheels, the ceaseless stream of pale, hard faces, intent on gain, or brooding over woe; amid endless prison walls of brick, beneath a lurid, crushing sky of smoke and mist."⁽¹⁾ His exemplification of the effects of the spirit of competition on living conditions is Jacob's Island, which reflects the peculiar vulnerability of the working-class poor:

The neighbourhood was undergoing, as it seemed, "improvements" of that peculiar metropolitan species which consists in pulling down the dwellings of the poor, and building up rich men's houses instead; and great buildings, within high temporary palings, had already eaten up half the little houses; as the great fish, and the great estates, and the great shopkeepers, eat up the little ones of their species — by the law of competition, lately discovered to be the true (2) creator and preserver of the universe.

Kingsley does not suggest that within the inorganic city, nuclei of working-class communities develop. Moreover, he presents London as a city which is doomed because of its godlessness:

Should not a London poet's work just now be to cry, like the Jew of old, about the walls of Jerusalem, "Woe, woe to this city?" (3)

(1) Kingsley, op. cit., ch.ix.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxxv.

In fact there were many reasons for the destruction of slums in Victorian London: new roads, railways and commercial developments, as well as new houses, replaced them. Most new developments cut through rookeries and were welcomed because they "ventilated" the slums and destroyed eyesores. Kingsley adduces no mitigating circumstances, choosing to mention the least justifiable form of replacement. His suggestion that the demolition of old property merely intensified overcrowding is no exaggeration, however, as H.J. Dyos points out, op. cit., p. 35.

(3) Kingsley, op. cit., ch.ix.

Far from being an element in which the individual may realize his potential for spiritual development, it is one which presents many obstacles, particularly to the poor: Kingsley singles out gin-palaces and cheap theatres, ("licensed pits of darkness", in Sandy Mackaye's words).

SLUM LIFE: CONDITIONS DESCRIBED

In their depiction of slum life mid-nineteenth-century novelists concentrate on physical conditions and many describe in detail areas of extreme squalor. Dickens' *Tom-all-Alone's*, though fictional, has the essential characteristics of rookeries such as Thomas Beames discussed in his book The Rookeries of London⁽¹⁾:

It is a black, dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people, where the crazy homes were seized upon, when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants who after establishing their own possession took to letting them out (2) in lodgings.

Jacob's Island, Bermondsey, and the rookery of St. Giles, two of Kingsley's working-class areas in Alton Locke, were also accorded chapters in Beames' book. Although Kingsley chooses two spectacularly unwholesome places, he does not seem to be presenting them as isolated plague-spots.

(1) Beames' book, first published in London in 1850, attempted to convey an impression of the squalor of some of London's poorest areas, to proffer explanations for their existence, and to suggest remedies for the evils they bred. He provided a two-fold analysis of the origins of rookeries: some were flimsily built and intended for the occupation of the poor; others were very old houses, currently tenanted by people very different in status from those for whom they were originally intended. Beames and Dickens both pointed to the significant role of middlemen in creating and perpetuating rookeries.

(2) Dickens, Bleak House (London, 1852-53), ch.xvi.

Sandy Mackaye takes Locke to St. Giles' to give him insight into the "reality" about which he thinks the young tailor-poet should be writing; and, after describing Clare Street market, Locke himself exhorts the reader:

Go, scented Belgravian! and see what London is! ⁽¹⁾
 Moreover, it is clear from the chapter 'The Lowest Deep' that Kingsley is not presenting the insalubrious conditions of Jacob's Island as an isolated evil:

Is the knife or the bludgeon, then, the only foul play, and not the cesspool and the curse of Rabshakeh? Go through Bermondsey or Spitalfields, St. Giles's or Lambeth, and see if there is not foul play enough already—to be tried hereafter at a more awful coroner's inquest than thou thinkest of! ⁽²⁾

Kingsley was not generalizing hysterically: the extremely insanitary condition of many working-class areas of London in the 1840s is well attested by expert investigators such as Hector Gavin, one of the contributors to Chadwick's Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain (1842). In his detailed account of Bethnal Green, Sanitary Ramblings, Gavin pointed out that he saw much in common in the poorer districts of large towns and cities:

In undertaking to draw up a Report on the present sanitary condition of the parish of Bethnal Green, I was actuated by the conviction that I should find in operation in that parish all those leading elements which tend to deteriorate the health, and prematurely to destroy no inconsiderable proportion of the population (sic) of large towns. ⁽³⁾

(1) Kingsley, op. cit., ch.viii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxxv.

(3) Hector Gavin, Sanitary Ramblings (London, 1848), p. 3.

In fact he subtitled his work:

Being sketches and illustrations of Bethnal Green,
a type of the condition of the metropolis and
other large towns. (1)

However, Kingsley adds the lustre of the sensational to his writing by using images which evoke the repellent, the sinister, even the demonic. (2)

Mrs. Trollope's description of Hoxton-lane in Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy (1839-40) is another example of the use of an extreme instance of squalor and untidiness, but Mrs. Gaskell provides slightly more muted images. The worst conditions she describes are those in the Davenports' cellar-dwelling, a single damp, foetid room. However, not even their circumstances would have constituted an isolated or an extreme case: in Distress in Manchester: Evidence of the state of the Labouring Classes in 1840-42 (1842), Joseph Adshead points out that in central districts of Manchester in 1840 there were 2,400 cellar-dwellings housing 9,179 inhabitants, and that many had several families to a room. The best working-class accommodation described in the novel is the Bartons' house. It is built round a central court, like most of the houses built for working people in Manchester, according to Engels' account in The

(1) Ibid.

(2) See Appendix II for a comparison of Kingsley's account of his visit to Bermondsey in a letter to Mrs. Kingsley with a description in Alton Locke of the same area.

Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844;⁽¹⁾

but, unlike many such courts, the one in which the Bartons' house is situated is paved. However, Mrs. Gaskell's avoidance of the most extreme examples of squalor should not blind the reader to the fact that the physical conditions of her working-class characters are very poor. The Bartons' house is in an ill-ventilated, overcrowded area, and the inhabitants have to suffer the unpleasant inconvenience of a central gutter into which "household slops, washing suds, etc." are thrown.⁽²⁾ Mrs. Gaskell, by her genteel use of the word "etc." conforms to the euphemistic practice of other mid-nineteenth-century observers and recorders of slums.⁽³⁾

ATTITUDES TO CONDITIONS DESCRIBED

It is clear from the types of slum which are most prominently represented in mid-nineteenth-century fiction that their overcrowded and insanitary condition was a major cause of concern. Novelists concurred in regarding the existence of slums as a manifestation of injustice, but

(1) First published in Leipzig in 1845; first published in Great Britain in 1892. The phrase "in 1844" was added to the title in 1887.

(2) Mrs. Gaskell, op. cit., ch.ii.

(3) Disraeli toned down some of the more unpleasant-sounding passages in Horne's report on Willenhall for the Children's Employment Commission (Second Report, 1842) which is the source of many of the details of Wodgate in *Sybil*. For instance Disraeli refers briefly and generally to the effect of the filth-heaps in the town, and does not dwell on the repulsive details, as Horne does; and Horne himself apologizes for referring to the "degraded fact" of the existence of the dung-hills in Willenhall.

even within this common area there are differences in emphasis and point of view.

A number of minor works of the period make their point about the injustice represented by the existence of slums with little subtlety or complexity, but they tell us something about current notions of what was due to the working classes. Woman's Wrongs (1855), a Chartist novel by Ernest Jones, is different from the others to be discussed in that Jones advocates a radical re-ordering of society in order to eliminate, among other evils, living conditions such as those described at the beginning of the narrative: it is seen as particularly galling to the poor that they can see the homes of the rich from their squalid dens. Most other novels among the minor works about slum life were written in a reforming not a revolutionary spirit; and they contain specific suggestions for the improvement of living conditions. Ginx's Baby (1870) by J.E. Jenkins, a satire on contemporary attitudes to the poor, advocates legislation enforcing improvements in workmen's dwellings, extension and enforcement of health laws and better provision of baths and washhouses. A very similar list of suggestions for improvement is provided by William Gilbert in Dives and Lazarus (1858), an episodic

hook, only marginally qualifying for the label "novel".⁽¹⁾
 In both Dives and Lazarus and De Profundis (1864) Gilbert points accusingly at the ineffectual poor laws and mal-administration by the poor-law officials, more concerned with the demoralization of the poor than with securing minimum physical standards of accommodation:

Did the parochial authorities, especially that portion of them known as the guardians of the poor, not step forward and claim public attention to the fact that so much hardship was practised upon those unable to defend themselves? — to the fact that hundreds were living in a manner destructive to their health and comfort? They did so, and eloquently enough. But for justice to these poor creatures they did not apply. They simply contented themselves with calling the attention of the higher authorities to the demoralised manner in which the inhabitants of certain localities lived, spreading disease around⁽²⁾ them, and increasing the parish rates...

Jenkins, in Ginx's Baby, attacks another patronizing, class-biased attitude to the poor — malthusianism. He addresses himself to the middle-class conscience with double force in that, while condemning "reformers'" suggestions that the poor should have smaller families, for the benefit of themselves and society, he attacks the hypocrisy of a society in which many an educated man resorted to prostitutes.

-
- (1) Gilbert's suggestions include the enforcement of a minimum space for every human being, the introduction of a system of inspection which would result in the demolition of unhealthy houses, the enforcement of proper sanitary regulations and a higher penalty for the breach of them, and the increased provision of bath and washing accommodation in every crowded district.
- (2) Gilbert, De Profundis (London, 1864), ch.xii.

In their treatments of slum life Kingsley and Dickens plead for a sense of justice and social responsibility, based on an awareness of the interrelatedness of social classes. Dickens' language of admonition in Bleak House suggests that he is presenting the phenomenon of the spread of disease from poor slum-dwellers to other social groups as evidence of the effect of retribution on a society which was collectively guilty:

...But he has his revenge...There is not a drop of Tom's corrupted blood but propagates infection and contagion somewhere. It shall pollute, this very night, the choice stream (in which chemists on analysis would find the genuine nobility) of a Norman house, and his Grace shall not be able to say Nay to the infamous alliance. There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, not an ignorance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing, but shall work its retribution through every order of society up to the proudest of the proud, and to the highest of the high. (1)

The element of justice is worked out in the narrative of Alton Locke when Locke's cousin George pays for his materialism and selfishness by dying from typhus after buying a coat produced by Jeremy Downes in his fever-ridden home. (2) Kingsley uses the Chartist uprising as

(1) Dickens, Bleak House, ch. xlvi.

(2) Although it has now been established that typhus is carried by body-lice, Kingsley's contemporaries, even professional doctors, failed to distinguish between typhus and typhoid and assumed that "the fever" was caused by bad air. When Kingsley says of Downes' family "the poisonous exhalations had killed them", he is reflecting the current miasmatic theory of the causation of disease, not making a hyperbolic assertion. Gavin refers to the iniquity of foul smells as follows:
In numerous instances...I found the air in the rooms of the poor...so saturate with putrescent exhalations, that to breathe it was to inhale a dangerous, perhaps fatal, poison. (Gavin, op.cit., p.8)

a means of pointing to the difficulties society accumulates for itself by neglecting the plight of the poor; and the treatment of George's fate is obviously informed by Kingsley's emphasis on personal moral responsibility. However, both he and Dickens appeal to the enlightened self-interest of their middle and upper-class readers, rather than striving for an imaginative re-creation of the sufferings of the working-class victims. ⁽¹⁾

Mrs. Gaskell does not present the Davenports' experience of sickness and squalor directly from their point of view, but she does come close to the workers' own perception of injustice by showing us John Barton's reaction and giving credibility to it by her organisation of narrative material. She creates in the reader a sense of the perplexing injustice of things in that Ben Davenport is a methodist and a conscientious workman. Moreover, in a single chapter she directly represents the extremes in living conditions which make Barton's anger and bitterness understandable — the Davenports' cellar-dwelling and Carson's

-
- (1) In Past and Present Carlyle writes of a poor Irish widow who died of typhus in an Edinburgh street after unsuccessfully seeking help from various charitable organisations. Seventeen others in the street caught the infection from her:

The forlorn Irish widow applies to her fellow-creatures, as if saying "Behold I am sinking, bare of help: ye must help me! I am your sister, bone of your bone; one God made us: ye must help me!" They answer, "No; impossible; thou art no sister of ours". But she proves her sisterhood; her typhus-fever kills them: they actually were her brothers, though denying it! (Carlyle, Past and Present, London, 1843, book 111 ch.ii, p. 149).

luxurious house, which contains so much more than the bare necessities of day-to-day living that it is described in terms of criteria of taste:

Mr. Carson's was a good house, and furnished with disregard to expense. But in addition to lavish expenditure, there was much taste shown, and many articles chosen for their beauty and elegance adorned his rooms. (1)

However, qualification is necessary. Despite the use of the phrase "with disregard to expense" there is no bitter irony in the subsequent authorial comment on the tasteful nature of the appointments; rather, it has the effect of mitigating the impression of unjustifiable extravagance given by the beginning of the sentence. Moreover, Mrs. Gaskell balances the passionate Barton with the more level-headed Wilson who is impressed rather than embittered by what he sees. Her preface to Mary Barton includes a comment which helps to explain the mixture of sympathetic understanding and detachment in her treatment of Barton's attitude to the inequalities of wealth between masters and men:

I had always felt a deep sympathy with the care-worn men, who looked as if doomed to struggle through their lives in strange alternations between work and want; tossed to and fro by circumstances, apparently in evenagreater degree than other men. A little manifestation of this sympathy and a little attention to the expression of feelings on the part of some of the work-people with whom I was acquainted, had laid open to me the hearts of one or two of the more thoughtful among them; I saw that they were sore and irritable against the rich, the even tenor of whose seemingly happy lives appeared to increase

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, op. cit., ch.vi.

the anguish caused by the lottery-like nature of their own. Whether the bitter complaints made by them, of the neglect which they experienced from the prosperous—especially from the masters whose fortunes they had helped to build up—were well-founded or no, it is not for me to judge. (1)

ATTITUDES TO THE WORKING-CLASS RESPONSE

Despite the prominence of details about overcrowding and squalor and the reflection of contemporary interest in sanitary reform, mid-nineteenth-century novels about working-class life also raise the issue of the demoralization of slum-dwellers. I have found no detailed, systematic and analytical treatment of the connection between the slum living and ignorance, vice and crime; but two major, antithetical responses are identifiable, sometimes in the work of the same writer. I shall examine first examples of a moralistic approach whereby a number of writers, including Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Frances Trollope, apply absolute standards in their evaluation of the capacity of the working classes to combat the demoralizing influences of their environment. I shall then look at novels in which the environment is seen as the strongest influence on attitudes and behaviour. This section of the chapter will take the form of an examination of some of the assumptions underlying Disraeli's treatment of working-class environments in Sybil and an analysis of the presentation of Jo in Bleak House, a novel in which a sense of relativity in judging the working-class response to slum life is seen as desirable, if judgement is appropriate at all.

(1) Ibid., preface.

Such writers as Mrs. Gaskell and Kingsley, who adopt a moralistic approach to the relationship between slum environments and behaviour, make some allowances for the pressures of living in a dirty, overcrowded and insanitary area. For example, Jemmy Downes' immoderate drinking habits are attributed partly to the pollution of the water supply and the foulness of the atmosphere on Jacob's Island. Locke is made to appear naïve when he suggests that Downes should drink water instead of spirits, and he receives the reply:

"Drink? and who can help drinking, with his stomach turned with such hell-broth as that — or such a hell's blast as this air is here, ready to vomit from morning till night with the smells." (1)

However, the basis of their evaluation is the assumption that working people can, or should try to, combat the demoralizing effects of poor living conditions. Certain structural parallels in Alton Locke invite a comparison between Crossthwaite and Jemmy Downes, the effect of which is to suggest that Downes' demoralization and misery were avoidable. There are several ways in which the two men are foils for each other: they differ in their attitudes to the change in the nature of their trade, from an "honourable" to a "sweated" one; Downes ill-treats his wife, whereas Crossthwaite is particularly gentle and considerate to his; Downes and his wife have two children whose lives are wasted, but Crossthwaite and his wife decide not to bring children into wretched circumstances; and Crossthwaite is a teetotaler, whereas Downes is a heavy drinker.

(1) Kingsley, op.cit., ch.xxxv.

Mrs. Gaskell suggests unobtrusively that the streets of Manchester offer the working classes routes to degradation - her reference to the gin-palace in Mary Barton is evidence; yet for the individual working-class characters in her novel the worst enemy within the immediate environment is not its aura of criminality or immorality but the surrounding squalor and poverty. (Henry Carson's trifling with Mary represents a threat from outside; and John Barton's crime is an isolated, politically-motivated action). The Bartons and Alice Wilson pass the test which Mrs. Gaskell applies to them, in that they maintain a high standard of cleanliness and orderliness in their homes. Alice's cellar "was the perfection of cleanliness: in one corner stood the modest-looking bed, with a check curtain at the head, the white-washed wall filling up the place where the corresponding one should have been. The floor was bricked, and scrupulously clean, although so damp that it seemed as if the last washing would never dry up".⁽¹⁾ Mrs. Gaskell evaluates her characters by applying standards by no means exclusive to, but particularly cherished by, the middle class.⁽²⁾ By means of a double process of selection she presents an idealized impression of the working classes without distorting individuals: she excludes the most vicious and criminal environments; and she concentrates her story on characters who are successful in combating the encroaching dirt.

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, op.cit., ch.ii.

(2) In Mansfield Park it is the disorderliness of Fanny Price's home in Portsmouth which vulgarizes it and makes it such a contrast to the Bertrams'.

The characteristic qualities of Mrs. Gaskell's presentation of working-class living conditions in an industrial town are brought more sharply into focus by a comparison with the presentation of the homes of industrial workers by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna⁽¹⁾ in Helen Fleetwood and Mrs. Frances Trollope in Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy. Mrs. Tonna bases her case against the factory system partly on the detrimental effect of factory life on characters as well as on the physical health of its inhabitants; and one of the novel's sharpest distinctions is the contrast between urban and rural influences. However, her approach to her characters is not tinged with sympathy on this score. Widow Green's daughter is crisply condemned by the author for her failure to create a satisfactory family home:

Of ornament there was no lack, but of neatness cleanliness, comfort, respectability, nothing relieved the eye: above all, it wanted cheerfulness. (2)

Mrs. Trollope presents the Widow Armstrong as a model of orderliness and cleanliness in her domestic arrangements, but her description of Hoxton-lane evokes disgust; and, because the condition of the street is partly attributable to the neglect of its inhabitants, we are left with a sense that Mrs. Trollope was a little cynical about the capacity and inclination of the working classes to make the best of

(1) Her pseudonym was 'Charlotte Elizabeth'.

(2) Mrs. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Helen Fleetwood (London, 1841), ch.iii.

their surroundings:

Exactly at the bottom of the hill, just at the point where every summer storm and winter torrent deposited their gatherings...began a long, closely-packed double row of miserable dwellings, crowded to excess by the population drawn together by the neighbouring factories. There was a squalid, untrimmed look about them all, that spoke fully as much of want of care, as of want of cash in the unthrifty tribe who dwelt there. It was like the moral delinquencies of a corporate body, of which no man is ashamed, because no man can be pointed at as the guilty ONE...The very vilest rags were hanging before most of the doors, as demonstration that washing of garments was occasionally resorted to within. Crawling infants, half-starved cats, mangy curs, and fowls that looked as if each particular feather had been used as a scavenger's broom, shared the dust and the sunshine between them while an odour, which seemed compounded of a multitude of villanous smells, all reeking together (1) into one, flabated over them...

Disraeli implies in Sybil that it would be both humane and expedient to provide "the people" with the means of living in clean and pleasant conditions. Egremont puts the case for seeing the provision of homes as a crucial issue in the "Condition of the People" question:

"Give men homes, and they will have soft and homely notions. If all men acted like Mr. Trafford, the condition of the people would be changed." (2)

The model village, untroubled by the evils of dirt and disorder, of vice and crime, tells us more about Disraeli's faith in the enlightened leader than about his attitude to the working classes, although the claims made for the efficacy of Trafford's village could not have been made by

(1) Mrs. Frances Trollope, Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy (London, 1839-40), ch.iv.

(2) Disraeli, op.cit., book 111, ch.ix.

a man sceptical about the capacity of the working classes to respond to the influence of a good environment. Improved standards of behaviour derive not from the direct response of the workers to better physical conditions but from the influence of the landlord and, in this case, employer:

Proximity to the employer brings cleanliness and order, because it brings observation and encourage-⁽¹⁾ment.

Disraeli's account of Trafford's model village draws many of its details from the sixth chapter of Edwin Chadwick's Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain (1842) which includes a description of the mills and village of the late Archibald Buchanan of Ayrshire. However, Chadwick admits that Buchanan's model village cannot be widely imitated, whereas Disraeli includes no such qualifications. He therefore implies that workers would accept this patronage and does not admit the possibility of a gap in understanding between landlord and tenants, employer and employees.

As we have seen, Disraeli attributes the evils of Wodgate, particularly the ignorance of its inhabitants, to the absence of a landlord such as Mr. Trafford. In a passage to be found in the manuscript version of The Old Curiosity Shop but not included in the published novel, Dickens suggests that there is a direct connection between

(1) Ibid., book 111, ch.viii.

physical overcrowding in urban slums and evils such as drunkenness and criminality:

In courts so numerous as to be marked in every street by numbers of their own, for names for them could not be found — in narrow, unpaved ways, exhaling foetid odours, steeped in filth and dirt, reeking with things offensive to sight, smell, hearing, thought; shutting out the light and air; breeding contagious diseases, big with fever, loathesome (sic) humours, madness, and a long ghastly train of ills — in places where, let men disguise it as they please! no human beings can be clean, or good, or sober, or contented — where no child can be born, but it is infected and tainted from the hour it draws its miserable breath, and never has its chance of mirth or happiness — in such noisome streets they, by tens of thousands, live and die and give birth to others, tens of thousands more, who live and die again, never growing better, but slowly and surely worse, and whose depraved condition — whose irreligion, improvidence, drunkenness, degeneracy, and, most unaccountable of all, whose discontent, good gentlemen reprobate in Parliament tide, till⁽¹⁾ they are hoarse...

Dickens fails in Oliver Twist to explore the connection between environment and character: in his characterization of Oliver he has to decide whether environment or heredity is the more powerful influence, instead of representing them as complementary forces as he does in the unpublished passage from The Old Curiosity Shop; and, implausibly, he chooses heredity. However, the character of Jo in Bleak House is much more environmentally determined; and Jo is an important figure in the book's ordering of values because, through this character, Dickens suggests that there are circumstances in which judgement should be suspended.

(1) This extract from the manuscript is reproduced in the Penguin English Library edition of The Old Curiosity Shop, edited by Angus Easson (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 705.

Dickens' professed attempt to help the reader to imagine what it is like to be Jo is ironical for it emphasizes the size of the gap between Jo's level of awareness and that of the reader, suggesting that the criteria by which we usually judge human beings are inapplicable to Jo:

It must be a strange state to be like Jo! To shuffle through the streets, unfamiliar with the shapes and in utter darkness as to the meaning, of those mysterious symbols, so abundant over the shops, and in the corner of streets, and on the doors, and in the windows!...It must be a strange state, not merely to be told that I am scarcely human (as in the case of my offering myself for a witness), but to feel it of my own knowledge all my life! To see the horses, dogs, and cattle, go by me, and to know that in ignorance I belong to them, and not to the superior beings (1) in my shape, whose delicacy I offend!

Jo's helpless ignorance disarms judgement. It could be objected that Dickens has veered too far towards sentimentality, and that it would be more plausible if Jo were shown to have developed sharpness and resilience, such as that which is characteristic of the homeless boys in James Greenwood's The True History of a Little Ragamuffin (1866). However, the existence of remarkable naïveté among young people whose lives were confined to slums is attested by Disraeli, whose based his account of the ignorance of Suky and Tummas on Blue Book evidence. Moreover, the creation of the character of the Artful Dodger is proof that Dickens perceived responses to slum life other than Jo's bewilderment, and that he deliberately chose to use an ignorant and helpless figure in Bleak House.

(1) Bleak House, ch.xvi.

The response of mid-nineteenth-century writers to slums and slum-dwellers understandably includes expressions of indignation about, rather than evocations of the working-class experience of squalor and overcrowding in slums; understandably because the novelists who wrote about these conditions were from the middle class. More significantly, although the working classes are sometimes subjected to the same criteria of moral judgement as would be applied to others in society, there are signs in fiction of an awareness that these criteria need to be modified or suspended. In Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton the result is a trembling balance between sympathy and detachment; in Dickens' novels which touch upon slum life, particularly in Bleak House, there is perplexity, presented with self-awareness and the knowledge that it will be shared with his readers. Parts of Dickens' description in Tom-all-Alone's reveal, indirectly, what was behind the middle-class response to the denizens of the slums. Dickens suggests that Tom-all-Alone's is the haunt of vice and crime, in language which arouses feelings of revulsion and fears of the unknown and unknowable masses of depressed. The images used de-personalize the inhabitants and make them potentially more horrifying because they do not appear to be subject to the restraints of the known and acceptable in human behaviour:

As on the ruined human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so, these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in... (1)

(1) Ibid.

When he describes the visit of Mr. Bucket and Mr. Snagsby to Tom-all-Alone's to try to find Jo, Dickens uses an image which suggests the sinister presence of the crowd in the background:

By the noisome ways through which they descended into that pit, they gradually emerge from it; the crowd flitting, and whistling, and skulking about them, until they come to the verge, where restoration of the bull's-eyes is made to Darby. Here the crowd, like a concourse of imprisoned demons, turns back,⁽¹⁾ yelling, and is seen no more.

The source of disturbance is not the potential political activism of the crowd but the awareness that the moral values of the law-abiding and respectable are not cherished by the masses who populate the plague-spots which society has allowed to develop.

(1) Ibid., ch.xxii.

CHAPTER II

THE WORKING CLASSES AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT: II

Few who will read these pages have any conception of what these pestilential human rookeries are, where tens of thousands are crowded together amidst horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave ship. To get into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions and often flowing beneath your feet; courts, many of them which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air, and which rarely know the virtues of a drop of cleansing water. You have to ascend rotten staircases, which threaten to give way beneath every step, and which, in some places, have already broken down, leaving gaps that imperil the limbs and lives of the unwary. You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then, if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance to the dens in which these thousands of beings who belong, as much as you, to the race for whom Christ died, (1) herd together.

It is clear from this extract from The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, published by the London Congregational Union in 1883, that some of those who worked among the poor felt that it was still necessary to draw attention, in the strongest terms to conditions in slums: the language is reminiscent of that used by Kingsley in Alton Locke, which was intended to awaken the conscience of the wealthy.

(1) W.C. Preston, The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (London, 1883), p.6.

In a note on the authorship of the pamphlet, printed in the Cass edition of 1970, W.H. Chaloner points out that the Rev. Andrew Mearns undertook the field work and the Rev. William Carnall Preston wrote the pamphlet.

Descriptive writing of this kind may be found in some novels written between 1880 and 1914: parts of David Christie Murray's A Life's Atonement (1880) are set in the rookery of Bolter's Rents which has the sparse furnishing, the broken staircases and the filth characteristic of slum properties described in earlier novels such as Alton Locke and Gilbert's Dives and Lazarus; and Gissing's Workers in the Dawn opens with a rhetorical description of a market and slums in the Barbican area:

The fronts of the houses, as we glance up towards the deep blackness overhead, have a decayed, filthy, often an evil, look; and here and there, on either side, is a low, yawning archway, or a passage some four feet wide, leading presumably to human habitations. Let us press through the throng to the mouth of one of these and look in, as long as the reeking odour will permit us. Straining the eyes into horrible darkness, we behold a blind alley, the unspeakable abominations of which are dimly suggested by a gas-lamp flickering at the further end...If we look up, we perceive that strong beams are fixed across between the fronts of the houses — sure sign of the rotten-⁽¹⁾ness which everywhere prevails.

A comment made later in the chapter suggests that Gissing is writing with what Beatrice Webb described as anew "consciousness of sin among men of intellect and men of property",⁽²⁾

(1) Gissing, Workers in the Dawn (London, 1880), book I, ch.1.

(2) Beatrice Webb, My Apprenticeship (London, 1926), p. 179 She recognises three stages in the development of this consciousness of sin — philanthropic and practical, literary and artistic, and analytic, historical and explanatory. It is defined as "a growing uneasiness, amounting to conviction, that the industrial organisation, which had yielded rent, interest and profits on a stupendous scale, had failed to provide a decent livelihood and tolerable conditions for a majority of the inhabitants of Great Britain." See pp.180 ff.

a sense of collective guilt:

We suffer them to become brutes in our midst,
and inhabit dens which clean animals would shun,
to derive their joys from sources from which a
cultivated mind shrinks as from a pestilential (1)
vapour.

The slum set piece is not so prominent a feature of
the fiction of the later period as of that written before
about 1880. In The Nether World (1889) Gissing writes
wearily of Shooter's Gardens:

Needless to burden description with further detail;
the slum was like any other slum; filth, rottenness,
evil odours, possessed these dens of superfluous
mankind and made them gruesome to the peering (2)
imagination.

However, there are fictional allusions; and there is discussion of some measures taken, particularly in the last third of the century, to improve the living conditions of the working classes. These include the activities of enlightened landlords and the demolition of slum property to make way for blocks of "model" dwellings. (3) I shall begin by examining attitudes expressed by novelists to some of these measures and to the working-class response to them. However, the major part of the chapter will be devoted to a study of fictional treatments of the social ambience, the "culture" of working-class areas or social strata. I shall use the word "culture" to refer to the corporate spirit of a working-class area or group, which manifests

(1) Workers in the Dawn, book I, ch.i.

(2) Gissing, The Nether World (London, 1889), ch.viii.

(3) For a survey of working-class housing during the nineteenth century see Five Per Cent Philanthropy by J.N. Tarn (1973).

itself in shared attitudes and moral values, social customs, and pleasures. (In his preface to Arthur St. John Adcock's East End Idylls (1897) James Adderley refers to the development of culture in this sense when he points out that the isolation of the East End had given its inhabitants a sense of unity and a corporate character with its own customs and traditions). In the final part of the chapter I shall look at a phenomenon which cuts across the first two sections:- interpretations of the relationship between the working classes and the environment in terms of the notion of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

I shall first look at Gissing's novel The Unclassed (1884) in some detail since it provides a sustained treatment of slum landlordism and has many points of contact with the contemporary movement inspired by Octavia Hill. ⁽¹⁾ I

-
- (1) Cf. Dickens' portrayals of Casby and Pancks in Little Dorrit.

Dickens uses Casby's exploitation of his tenants to expose a sham benevolence, dangerous because, superficially, Casby corresponds to the popular image of a genuine benefactor. One of the most interesting features of Dickens' treatment of slum landlordism is his creation of the character Pancks, who appears to be trapped in his corrupting professional rôle until he startlingly asserts his independence and integrity in an exposure of Casby's hypocrisy which frightens Pancks himself:

A bare-polled, goggle-eyed, big-headed lumbering personage stood staring at him, not in the least impressive, not in the least venerable, who seemed to have started out of the earth to ask what was become of Casby. After staring at this phantom in return, in silent awe, Mr. Pancks threw down his shears, and fled for a place of hiding, where he might lie sheltered from the consequences of his crime. (Little Dorrit, London, 1855-57, Book II, ch.xxxii)

shall then examine two complementary treatments of the effects of the demolition of slum properties, in A Child of the Jago (1896) by Arthur Morrison and Adcock's story 'The Street that was Condemned' (East End Idylls). Finally, I shall touch upon the implications of a number of references to life in model dwellings.

(1) Slum Landlordism: The Unclassed.

In The Unclassed the working-class inhabitants of the slum houses in Litany Lane and Elm Court appear primarily to reflect the types of landlordism practised by Abraham Woodstock, who represents a neglectful landlord, and his grand-daughter Ida Starr, who is Gissing's portrait of an ideal one. Although Gissing admits that there are severe pressures on accommodation which make Woodstock's laissez-faire landlordism possible, he does not attempt to analyse the causes of the housing problem. However, he does widen the area of debate a little: Waymark's involvement as a rent-collector brings working-class living conditions into the novel's discussion of the relationship between art and social problems, and the rôle of the artist.

Gissing treats the slums and their inhabitants with a restraint which makes his attitude seem considered, not emotional, and more widely applicable than if he were to present an extreme case as a typical one. The properties are squalid and the area insanitary, but it is not as spectacularly poor as the slum areas described by Kingsley in

Alton Locke, Dickens in Bleak House and Disraeli in Sybil; and the restraint in Gissing's description is evinced by the matter-of-fact presentation of details, the use of understatement, and the inclusion of details which modify the overall impression of filth and messiness:

Litany Lane was a narrow passage, with houses only on one side; opposite to them ran a long high wall, apparently the limit of some manufactory. Two posts set up at the entrance to the Lane showed that it was no thoroughfare for vehicles. The houses were of three storeys. There were two or three dirty little shops, but the rest were ordinary lodging-houses, the front-doors standing wide open as a matter of course, exhibiting a dusky passage, filthy stairs, with generally a glimpse right through into the yard in the rear. In Elm Court the houses were smaller, and had their fronts whitewashed...The dirty little casements on the ground floor exhibited without exception a rag of red or white curtain on the one side, prevailing fashion evidently requiring no corresponding drapery on the other. The Court was a cul de sac, and at the far end stood a receptacle for ashes, the odour from which was intolerable. Strangely enough, almost all the window-sills displayed flower-pots, and, despite the wretched weather, several little bird-cages (1) hung out from the upper storeys.

The occupants who are singled out exemplify a variety of responses to Woodstock, whose personal responsibility as a defaulting landlord is made abundantly clear in the moralistic turn of the narrative when he dies from an outbreak of smallpox which starts in his slums. (2) Some, quietly respectable, pay their rents without fuss; but the others

(1) Gissing, The Unclassed (London, 1884), ch.xii.

(2) Since Gissing admired and wrote about Dickens (Charles Dickens: A Critical Study, 1898), it seems possible that he derived the idea for this situation from Bleak House. For an assessment of Dickens' influence on Gissing, see Jacob Korg, George Gissing: A Critical Biography (Seattle, 1963), pp. 258-265.

illustrate the ill effects of Woodstock's landlordism. The shifty tenants who use devious means to evade both payment and eviction are represented by the mother who has taught her nine-year-old daughter to warn her of Woodstock's arrival so that she may feign illness by way of excusing herself for not paying the rent. The suffering and discomfort entailed in living in these slums are exemplified by the miseries of the Irish washerwoman and her baby, which contracts a throat disease as a result of being constantly in the damp.

Since Ida is a landlord of the Octavia Hill "school", it seems appropriate to put the novel in its social context by describing the main features of Miss Hill's attitudes and practice before examining and evaluating Gissing's treatment of Ida. Her main aims were:- to provide for the needs of the families of unskilled labourers⁽¹⁾; to free people from "the tyranny and influence of a low class of landlords and landladies" and from "the corrupting effect of continual forced communication with very degraded fellow lodgers"⁽²⁾; to restore the self-respect of slum-dwellers by encouraging the tenants to live careful and thrifty lives and to help themselves rather than to rely on charity; and, if possible, to make her properties pay. Her first oppor-

(1) See Octavia Hill, preface to second edition (1883) of Homes of the London Poor (1875), p. 14.

(2) Octavia Hill, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

tunity to do something about poor living conditions came in 1864 when Ruskin asked her advice about how to put to good use a sum of money which he had inherited from his father. Over the next twenty years she became the owner or manager of small groups of slum houses in several districts including Marylebone, Whitechapel and Lambeth. A most important feature of the practical application of her principles was her frequent contact with the tenants, with whom she developed a personal, but not an interfering relationship:

...my endeavours in ruling these people should be to maintain perfect strictness in our business relations, perfect respectfulness in our personal relations. (1)

After cleaning and repairing those parts of the houses for which she was responsible, such as passages, stairs and yards, she encouraged the tenants to take an interest in their surroundings by engaging their help: she paid the older girls in the houses to clean the passages; she told the tenants how much money she had to pay for repairs in each house, and promised that, if the cost of repairs fell short of what she had to spend, the tenants could decide how the balance should be spent. She rigorously demanded punctual payment of rents and evicted defaulters, thus insuring against financial loss. She writes of her first scheme:

The pecuniary success of the plan has been due to two causes. First, to the absence of middlemen; and secondly, to great strictness

(1) Ibid., p. 42.

about punctual payment of rent...The law respecting such tenancies seems very simple, and when once the method of proceeding is understood, the whole business is easily managed; and I must say most seriously that I believe it to be better to pay legal expenses for getting rid of tenants than to lose by arrears of rent... (1)

Eviction sometimes resulted from the imposition of a moral test on the tenants: Octavia Hill made sure that anyone living an immoral life was sent away. (2)

When Ida inherits Elm Court and Litany Lane she cleans them and puts them in a better state of repair. She personally supervises the collection of rents and, by doing so, establishes personal contact with the occupants of her houses. Although she is at first received with suspicion, as Octavia Hill was, she overcomes the barrier with tact. However, she is strict in demanding prompt payment of rents and in enforcing standards of cleanliness:

Lodgers in the Lane and the Court had come to understand that not even punctual payment of weekly rent was sufficient to guarantee them stability of tenure. Under this singular lady-landlord something more than that was expected and required, and, whilst those who were capable of adjusting themselves to the new régime found, on the whole, that things went vastly better with them, such as could by no means overcome their love of filth, moral and material, troubled themselves little when the notice to quit came,

(1) Ibid., p. 22.

(2) Housing associations, such as the philanthropic Peabody Trust, set up in 1862, and the commercial Improved Industrial Dwellings Company, founded in 1863, limited their provision of accommodation to those not of the poorest class and to people who were of unimpeachable morality. In A Life's Atonement Dr. Brand thinks it may be possible to improve Bolter's Rents, but only for the "deserving" poor.

together with a little sum of ready money to⁽¹⁾ cover the expenses of removal.

However, there is a significant difference between Ida and Octavia Hill. Ida's social background is that of her tenants, and her understanding of the types of people she encounters is seen by Gissing as a valuable asset:

Ida was excellently fitted for the work she had undertaken. She knew so well, from her own early experience, the nature of the people with whom she was brought in contact, and had that instinctive sympathy with their lives without which it is so vain to attempt practical social reform. ⁽²⁾

He emphasizes the practical, pointing out that Ida is no theoretician, in terms which suggest that hers was the soundest approach.

In order to evaluate Gissing's treatment of Ida's rôle as an enlightened landlord, it is necessary to see the novel in historical perspective. Almost a hundred years have elapsed since Gissing wrote it, and it is now difficult to share Gissing's wholehearted approval of Ida's intervention in the lives of her tenants. Her execution of her rôle seems unsatisfactory in that it does not take into account the fate of those evicted for not paying their rents; yet regular payment of rents was impossible for many of the casual poor, whose work was seasonal and ill-paid. However, as we have seen, Gissing reflects the attitudes of con-

(1) The Unclassed, ch.xxxviii.

(2) Ibid, ch.xxxvi.

temporary reformers in concentrating on the improvement of living conditions for the deserving rather than all strata of the working classes. The contention that Ida is a more effective landlord because she belongs to the same class as her tenants is theoretically persuasive; but Gissing's treatment of her relations with the tenants of Litany Lane and Elm Court is a little sentimental. Although he refers to Ida's initial difficulty in gaining their trust, he represents in detail and dramatically only the garden parties which she holds for the children before Woodstock's death. She is seen through the eyes of the adoring children, not of parents who might take exception to having their children washed:

They streamed along the carriage-drive, and in a minute or two were all clustered upon the lawn behind the house. What was expected of them? Had an angel taken them by the hand and led them straight from Litany Lane through the portals of paradise, they could not have been (1) more awed and bewildered.

The housing issue occupies an important place in The Unclassed because it leads Osmond Waymark to examine his attitude to the relationship between the artist and the social reformer. Waymark's opinions are very similar to some of Gissing's, although Gissing made clear in a letter to his brother, written in June 1884, that Waymark's attitudes are not to be regarded as identical with his own:

(1) Ibid., ch.xxxiii.

You evidently take Waymark's declaration of faith as my own. Now this is by no means the case. Waymark is a study of character, and he alone is responsible for his sentiments. Do you not perceive this in the very fact of the contradiction in the book of which you speak? If my own ideas are to be found anywhere, it is in the practical course of events in the story; my characters must speak as they would actually, and I cannot be responsible for what they say. (1)

An earlier letter, written to his brother in 1880, defines his aims in writing Workers in the Dawn:

I mean to bring home to the people the ghastly condition (material, mental, and moral) of our poor classes, to show the hideous injustice of our whole system of society, to give light upon the plan of altering it, and, above all, to preach an enthusiasm for just and high ideals in this age of unmitigated egotism and "shop". (2)

Waymark once had such youthful radicalism but feels that he has outgrown it:

"That zeal on behalf of the suffering masses was nothing more nor less than disguised zeal on behalf of my own starved passions...I identified myself with the poor and ignorant; I did not make their cause my own, but my own cause theirs." (3)

Waymark's determination to see life only as "the source of splendid pictures, inexhaustible material for effects" (4) recalls Gissing's own declaration of intent in a letter written to his brother in 1883:

(1) Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family, edited by Algernon and Ellen Gissing (London, 1927), letter to Algernon Gissing (23 June, 1884), p. 140.

(2) Ibid., p. 83.

(3) The Unclassed, ch.xxv.

(4) Ibid., ch.xv.

My attitude henceforth is that of the artist pure and simple. The world is for me a collection of phenomena, which are to be studied and reproduced artistically. (1)

However, the emptiness of Waymark's claim to be detached is revealed through his experiences. He engages in zealous efforts to improve conditions in slum houses by trying to impose standards of cleanliness on their occupants and by attempting to persuade Woodstock to take seriously his responsibilities as a landlord. Moreover, the tables are turned on him when Slimy captures him, ties him up and steals the rent money. The slum-dwellers apparently refuse to be simply the material for artistic observation and offer a disturbing challenge to Waymark's revised notions.

(11) The Destruction of the Slums

While Octavia Hill was trying to re-habilitate poor-quality accommodation, the process of demolition continued. (2)

(1) Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family,
pp. 128-129.

(2) The middle and later Victorian periods were a time of much legislative activity in the field of working-class housing. In 1875 the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act was passed and amended by an act in 1879. The amendment was necessary because it was proving difficult to provide accommodation in the slum clearance area for people made homeless by the demolition of insanitary houses. A Select Committee was set up in 1881-82 because of dissatisfaction about the effectiveness of existing legislation; and further acts were passed in 1882, 1890, 1891, 1894 and 1900. In 1902 a Joint Select Committee laid stress on the recommendation that any new houses should be suitable for the labouring classes and not too ambitious in character and design.

In A Child of the Jago Arthur Morrison draws attention to the failure of authorities to provide cheap accommodation for people made homeless by the demolition of slum property. The first large scheme undertaken by the new London County Council under the Housing of the Working Classes Act in 1890 was the improvement of the Boundary Street area of Shoreditch, known in reality as the Nichol and called the Jago in Morrison's novel. Morrison's introductory remarks show that he regarded the area as exceptionally demoralized:

What was too vile for Kate Street, Seven Dials, and Ratcliff Highway in its worst day, what was too useless, incapable and corrupt — all that (1) teemed in the Old Jago.

The book Housing of the Working Classes in London (1913), produced by the L.C.C., bears out in statistical terms Morrison's impression of the social and moral ambience of the Nichol: there was a high proportion of criminals, and the death rate in 1890 was 40 per 1,000, compared with 18.4 per 1,000 in London as a whole. There was, therefore, an urgent need that something should be done about the area. Official figures conceal the problem actually created by the improvement scheme. According to these, accommodation was provided by the Council for 5,525 people, 194 fewer than the number displaced and 824 more than the scheme required. In fact only 11 of the 5,719 people displaced took rooms in the new blocks. The "improvements", far

(1) Arthur Morrison, A Child of the Jago (London, 1896), ch.i.

from removing the cancer, caused it to spread beyond the Nichol area:

The dispossessed Jagos had gone to infect the neighbourhoods across the border, and to crowd the people a little closer. They did not return to live in the new barrack-buildings; which was a strange thing, for the County Council was charging very little more than double the rents which the landlords of the Old Jago had charged. And so another Jago, teeming and villainous as the one displaced, was slowly growing, in the form of a ring, (1) round about the great yellow houses.

Morrison is therefore questioning complacency about new provisions for housing the poor; his area of concern is the moral health of the urban community.

Adcock's story 'The Street that was Condemned' presents the point of view of the dispossessed: the sentimental importance of Cott Street, condemned by the authorities, is implied in Adcock's sympathetic presentation of the old woman's refusal to leave her home. The story does not present a reactionary attitude to the destruction of insanitary streets: there is a clear note of reproach in Adcock's recording of the fact that the local authority ignored the district until there was a smallpox outbreak. However, this story, like others in Adcock's collection, makes no attempt to give a detached evaluation of the social problems. Adderley's introduction asserts:

We must not worship logic or adore statistics... (2)

(1) Ibid., ch.xxxi.

(2) James Adderley, preface to St. John Adcock's East End Idylls (London, 1897).

The stories border on the sentimental in taking as their node the emotional response of a working-class character, sometimes using an obviously pathetic or idealized figure to evoke sympathy.

(iii) New Surroundings

In A Child of the Jago Morrison refers to "the new barrack buildings." The term is applicable to the block dwellings erected throughout the Victorian period by the commercial and philanthropic housing associations.⁽¹⁾

Another unappealing feature of life in these dwellings was the supervision, by managers and caretakers, to maintain standards of cleanliness and keep down unruly behaviour.

In The Mutable Many (1897) Robert Barr makes references to both the continuing existence of squalid courts and the restrictions on liberty experienced by those living in model dwellings, showing a conventionally sympathetic response to the working-class families affected. Gissing in The Nether World offers a more cynical interpretation: he points out that the slum Shooter's Gardens is preferred by the working classes in the area to a nearby block of model dwellings because here was "the liberty to be as vile as they pleased."⁽²⁾

William Pett Ridge's attitude runs counter to both the cynical and the philanthropic concern schools. He

(1) See Tarn, op.cit., p. 47, for comment on this aspect of Peabody Buildings.

(2) The Nether World, ch.viii.

recognizes that some of the new blocks of dwellings are bleak and even uncomfortable, but he distinguishes between the outsider's and the insider's view of them:

Pandora Buildings, despite its bare passages and blank, asphalted yard and draughty balconies, all suggesting that it was a place where people were sent for some infraction of the law, was, nevertheless, for its inhabitants sufficiently cheerful, and there were very few of them who were not happy. To understand this fact, it was necessary to become an inhabitant in Pandora, and not merely to come down on a hurried visit, as lady philanthropists did, and sniff, and look sympathetic, and tell each other that it was all (1) quite too dreadful.

There is either ambiguity in Ridge's comment or ambivalence in his attitude: is he implying that the working-class inhabitants of Pandora Buildings have an inner strength which enables them to remain cheerful, whatever their surroundings, or is he showing condescension by suggesting that they are less sensitive than others to the environment? It seems likely that Ridge's conscious intention was to express faith in the capacity of the working classes to make the best of their conditions. This interpretation is supported by a short story, 'Games at Mercutio', in Ridge's collection Up Side Streets (1903). The Mercutio of the title refers to Mercutio Buildings, a model block dwelling. The occupants' children have to play on what is uninvitingly described as "the large asphalted space between Block A and Block B." However, the story places more emphasis on the inventiveness of the children than on the inadequacies of

(1) William Pett Ridge, Mord Em'ly (London, 1898), ch.ii.

the surroundings:

As a matter of fact, a good many children live at Mercutio, and they seem to play every game that has ever been invented with an economy of material that is little short of amazing. (1)

Ridge's writing is characteristic of that of the "Cockney School", whose approach to the working-class cultural environment will constitute an important part of the next section of the chapter.

THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

In his book The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction (1971) P.J. Keating says:

The intention of the Cockney novelists was to challenge the popular, violent image of working-class life, not by ignoring the element of truth it contained, but by placing it in perspective, by showing it to be merely a part of a total pattern of cockney culture. (2)

Dr. Keating points out that he is using the term "the Cockney School" more specifically than do historians of the English novel, to whom it signifies all novelists of the 1890s who wrote about East End Life. He draws a distinction between two types of novel in this broad category:

The writers influenced by 'Badalia Herodsfoot' painted a spiritually cramped, narrow, and one-sided picture of working-class life; the Cockney School, a more optimistic, happy and culturally inclusive portrait. (3)

(1) Ridge, 'Games at Mercutio', Up Side Streets (London, 1903).

(2) P.J. Keating, The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction (London, 1971), p. 208.

(3) Ibid., p. 199. 'Badalia Herodsfoot', a story by Kipling about marital violence, will be discussed in chapter III.

Dr. Keating includes the following novelists in the term "Cockney School": Henry Nevinson, who worked in the East End, running English Literature classes and organizing an East End mission; Edwin Pugh, the son of a Marylebone barber; William Pett Ridge; and Arthur St. John Adcock.⁽¹⁾ I shall begin this section by examining the attitudes of the Cockney School to working-class culture, drawing most of my illustrations from the work of Ridge, because his writing contains some of the clearest examples of the attitudes I shall try to define, and because his short stories in particular include much material relevant to this chapter as a whole. I shall then look at examples of writing conceived in a very different spirit, that which characterizes working-class culture as offensively vulgar, demoralized or stifled by respectability. The last part of this section of the chapter will concentrate on a novel which presents the working classes of the East End as culturally deprived, Walter Besant's All Sorts and Conditions of Men.

(1) The Cockney School.

According to the Cockney School, working-class London is rich in entertaining incident and varieties of human types⁽²⁾

-
- (1) Dr. Keating includes Clarence Rook in the group. Although I shall later refer to three of his stories, I prefer to leave him out of the Cockney School group of writers whose work will be discussed at the beginning of this section because he has a more dispassionate, sociological approach than any of the other writers of this group. I shall, however, include J. Dodsworth Brayshaw's Slum Silhouettes (1898).
- (2) However, it presents stumbling-blocks to the unwary in the form of temptations to vice and crime. The father of two street arabs in 'Bessie's Burfday' (Slum Silhouettes) succumbs to drink when he comes to London from the country.

and the working-class Londoner has an admirable capacity for enjoying London street life. The *raison d'être* of a piece entitled 'A Riverside Garden' in Ridge's Next Door Neighbours (1904) is that the setting of a quiet churchyard in Shadwell can be used for the purpose of describing the variety of mainly working-class people who frequent it. His story 'The Return of Marjory' in Up Side Streets (1903) makes its main point the variety of London street life. Although Marjory returns to her home in Shoreditch full of enthusiasm about country life, she quickly realizes that she derives more enjoyment from London streets. After watching a fire she makes her way home, but the excitement is not over:

Before reaching home she saw a horse down, an argument between an earnest Salvation girl and a bemused Free-thinker, a loaded waggon rendered lame by the breaking of an axle, and the arrest of a white-socked infant by two policemen for not knowing where its home was. A crowded, delightful evening. (1)

The notion of a working-class culture presupposes a sense of community, or of several communities, from the London working-class community as a whole, to that of the area, the street and the court. Some conventions and customs obtain in the wider community — the tradition of the Bank Holiday outing, for example; others belong to groups of streets or even to individual ones. (2) Ridge's

(1) Ridge, 'The Return of Marjory', Up Side Streets (London, 1903).

(2) Thomas Wright's Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes provides some interesting insights into working-class culture. More recent studies which dwell on this aspect of working-class life are The Classic Slum (1971) by Robert Roberts, about Salford in the early years of this century, and The Uses of Literacy (1957) by Richard Hoggart.

'Life in Kayses' (Up Side Streets) suggests that each street or court, apparently insignificant, has its own identity. The community spirit as delineated by the Cockney School does not always express itself in a kindly manner. One of its manifestations is gossip, which is presented as often vituperative but not ultimately harmful. Reputations are the currency of gossip in Pleasant Place, in Ridge's story of that name in Next Door Neighbours:

The highest luxury of debate comes when a point of reputation arises. A reputation in Pleasant Place is as a mirror, a single breath upon it (1) becomes noticeable.

However, according to Ridge's vision of human nature, nothing kills the more positive expressions of the community spirit in working-class areas of London: if disaster strikes anyone in the street, the others rally round. Ridge minimizes the destructive power of gossip in Mrs. Galer's Business (1905). Although the novel is punctuated by the jealously critical comments passed on Mrs. Galer by her neighbours, he renders them harmless by making them absurd and amusing and by allowing Mrs. Galer to remain unaffected, in both her circumstances and her peace of mind.

There is tragic potential in this story but it does not come to fruition. This pattern exemplifies one way in which writers of the Cockney School veer away from

(1) Ridge, 'Pleasant Place' in Next Door Neighbours (London, 1904).

realistic presentation of characters and situations which may be disturbing.⁽¹⁾ They do not do so by avoiding all references to vice and crime, but by presenting them in melodramatic terms or as harmless, even amusing. Brayshaw resorts to melodrama in some of the stories in Slum Silhouettes. 'The Snide Pitcher' describes the fate of a man who is wrongly imprisoned. When he leaves prison he cannot get a job and drifts into the criminal world. The melodramatic contrivances in the story include the death of his wife from shock when she hears that her husband has been found guilty of passing stolen goods in a pawnbroker's. 'Dicky Notton's Top Floor' tells the story of a working-class woman who commits suicide because she is distressed by the malicious gossip of her neighbours; but the stereotyped characters and platitudinous commentary work the story towards melodrama rather than moving realism. Sometimes lawlessness is presented as the expression of high spirits, as it is in Mord Em'ly. The gang to which the heroine belongs is not a serious threat to anyone: its energies are worked off in witty repartee and fairly innocuous horseplay. Ridge's suggestion that Mord Em'ly's theft is attributable to superfluous energy rather than to

(1) There are exceptions. The story 'Duffers' in Next Door Neighbours expresses a sense of the hopelessness of trying to teach boys from very poor homes, many of them ill-clad and underfed. Parts of Edwin Pugh's Mother-Sister (1900) are convincing and disturbing: this is true of the irresponsibility of the young brother of Maddie, the "mother-sister" of the title.

dishonesty is developed into a flippant treatment of the trial.⁽¹⁾ Ridge's use of comedy to deflect potentially disturbing considerations is illustrated by his handling of the character of Mrs. Galer's husband. He is a drunkard who makes only a brief appearance before dying. The author turns the relationship between the two into comedy of a conventional kind by showing an endearing inconsistency in Mrs. Galer, who complains bitterly about her husband before his death but springs to his defence afterwards.

In the next section of the chapter I shall examine the work of a number of individual writers of the 1880s and 1890s, some of whose novels and short stories contain images of working-class culture against which the writers of the Cockney School reacted.

(ii) Liza of Lambeth.

Liza of Lambeth (1897) occupies a transitional position in the categories which I am using in this part of the chapter. The novel is rich in detail about the culture of working-class life in general and Vere Street,

(1) The two girls in 'Visitors from Town' (Next Door Neighbours) are mischievous and cheeky, but they are not subjected to moralizing comment. Their rôle in the story is to show up the slow-thinking country boy who works at the station and who takes himself too seriously.

Lambeth, in particular:- children's games in the street, the Bank Holiday outing⁽¹⁾, boxing, the popular theatre, hearty enjoyment of beer and tasty food, the slum girl's love of finery, courtship conventions, attitudes to marriage and adultery. Although Maugham shows the attractive vitality of slum life, mainly in his portrayal of Liza, he presents the vulgarity of it self-consciously with condescension or disapproval.

Maugham sees an appealing colourfulness, even dignity, in some features of slum life. Liza's love of striking clothes⁽²⁾, her harmless exhibitionism and her quickness of repartee are presented as attractive qualities. (Unlike Ridge, he does not find it necessary to make this point by portraying middle-class life as etiolated by dreary primness.⁽³⁾) The young people who dance in the street exhibit an impressive stateliness:

They held themselves very upright; and with an air of grave dignity which was quite impressive, glided slowly about, making their steps with the utmost precision, bearing themselves with sufficient decorum for a court ball.⁽⁴⁾

-
- (1) See also 'Lizerunt' in Tales of Mean Streets (1894) by Arthur Morrison, The Nether World, ch.xii, 'Too Clever by Half' in East End Idylls. Booth comments:
The mischievous results of Bank Holiday outings are frequently noted in our evidence.
(Booth, Life and Labour of the People in London, 3rd ed. London, 1902-3, Final Volume, pp. 50-51.
- (2) In her physical attractiveness and love of finery Liza is similar to Millicent presented by Henry James in The Princess Casamassima (1886) as "to her blunt, expanded finger-tips a daughter of London, of the crowded streets and bustling traffic of the great city". (Book I, ch.iv).
- (3) See his treatment of Mord Em'ly's employers.
- (4) W. Somerset Maugham, Liza of Lambeth (London, 1897), ch.1.

However, Maugham is less at ease with another kind of communal working-class pleasure, the Bank Holiday outing. The time spent at the half way house on the way to Chingford is labelled, with heavy irony, "The Idyll of Corydon and Phyllis" and in it Maugham tries to draw humour from the incongruity between the pastoral associations of the names and the unpolished language and behaviour of the young people from Lambeth. There is no consistent attempt to reproduce the sounds of the accents by means of the spelling used in the dialogue, but the absence of aspirates and the use of incorrect forms gives, crudely, a sense of the social context:

"'Urry up an' 'ave your whack," said Corydon, politely handing the foaming bowl for his fair one to drink from.

Phyllis, without replying, raised it to her lips and drank deep. The swain watched anxiously.

"'Ere, give us a chanst!" he said, as the pot was raised higher and higher and its contents⁽¹⁾ appeared to be getting less and less.

The spitting contest is obviously contrived to emphasize the vulgarity of the habits of the group:

(1) Ibid., ch.v.
See The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction, ch. x, for a discussion of conventions of reproducing dialect in print, and attitudes to the use of oaths by the working man. Dr. Keating points out that nineteenth-century novelists, including the Cockney School and those who presented a grimmer picture of working-class culture, such as Gissing and Morrison, eschewed direct representation of swearing. The Cockney School and Maugham alluded to the habit of swearing in a self-conscious, sometimes jocular way, but Gissing was more cynical.

Then Corydon spat, and immediately his love said:

"I can spit farther than thet."

"I bet ^{yer}yer can't."

She tried, and did. He collected himself and spat again, further than before, she followed him, and in this idyllic contest they remained till the tootling horn warned them to take their places. (1)

There is a more sombre side to Maugham's treatment of working-class culture. (2) The working-class man who has had too much to drink quickly becomes violent in Maugham's *Lambeth*: Sally learns this very early in her marriage, and Liza experiences this tendency in Jim. The power of drink has an adverse effect on the character of Mrs. Kemp: she is slightly pathetic as well as comic in her devious attempts to wheedle money from Liza and to hide from her daughter the extent of her degradation. Mrs. Kemp provides strong evidence that Maugham does not present the working class in his novel as honest, down-to-earth and the guardians of genuine values. Mrs. Kemp pays lip-service to respectability, but it is an indication of her superficiality. While Liza is dying, Mrs. Kemp talks emptily about the respectable funeral which she will stage:

"I want it done very respectable," said Mrs. Kemp; "I'm not goin' ter stint for nothin' for my daughter's funeral. I like plumes, you know, (3) although they is a bit extra."

(1) Liza of Lambeth, ch.v.

(2) See also chapter III below.

(3) Maugham, op.cit., ch.xii.

Working-class funeral conventions may be an interesting manifestation of the existence of a culture; Maugham implies that they may mask emotional sterility.

(iii) Thyrza and Workers in the Dawn

Gissing distinguishes between demoralization and honest, if unrefined, enjoyment in his treatment of the cultural ambience of working-class life, but this distinction is not applied consistently throughout his five novels relevant to this study. The clearest differentiation between innocent enjoyment and the irresponsible self-indulgence which signifies degradation is to be found in Thyrza (1887) and may be illustrated by details from Gissing's treatment of the public-house scene on market night. He recognizes that a visit to the public house was an accepted part of the routine of most market-shoppers and writes of it without disapproval or cynicism:

With few exceptions the frequenters of the
Walk turned into the public-house as a
natural incident of the evening's business. (1)

He does not represent all who enter as actually or potentially depraved, although the gathering includes some "liquor-sodden creatures whose look was pollution." (2) Thyrza's

(1) Gissing, Thyrza (London, 1887), ch.iv.
The significance of Gissing's attitude may be more clearly understood after consultation of Brian Harrison's Drink and the Victorians (1971). In ch.ii, where he examines types of drinking-place and suggests reasons for the magnitude of the drink problem, he points out that by the 1850s no respectable urban Englishman would enter an ordinary public house.

(2) Thyrza, ch.iv.

anxiety about entering a public house derives from her sensitivity to Lydia's disapproval; there is nothing in the behaviour of the company to cause her to feel ashamed. However, Gissing frequently reminds the reader of his sense of the inability of most working-class people to express their instinct for beauty in anything but a coarse manner. It is a weakness in articulation, not in the quality of feeling. This emerges in his complex comment on the sight and sound of children dancing to the music of a street organ:

Do you know that music of the obscure ways, to which children dance? Not if you have only heard it ground to your ears' affliction beneath your windows in the square. To hear it aright you must stand in the darkness of such a by-street as this, and for the moment be at one with those who dwell around, in the bleary-eyed houses, in the dim burrows of poverty, in the unmapped haunts of the semi-human. Then you will know the significance of that vulgar clanging of melody; a pathos of which you did not dream will touch you, and therein the secret of hidden London will be half revealed. The life of men who toil without hope, yet with the hunger of an unshaped desire; of women in whom the sweetness of their sex is perishing under labour and misery...all that is purely human in these darkened multitudes speaks to you as you listen. It is the half-conscious striving of a nature which knows not what it would attain, which deforms a true thought by gross expression, which clutches at the beautiful (1) and soils it with foul hands.

There are several significant aspects of Gissing's response here. The phrase "dim burrows" suggests the existence of large numbers of people on an animal level, and the implications are developed in "the unmapped haunts of the semi-

(1) Ibid., ch.ix.

human", which evokes images of races of being unknown to the civilized world. "Blear-eyed houses" is particularly evocative because it suggests not only the blank appearance of the slum houses but also the mental and spiritual myopia of the occupants. There is compassion in the references to the hopeless labour of working-class men and women, but there is not sentimentality. Gissing's instinctive response to the music is displeasure because the sound is ugly to him, but the analysis of his response leads him to a saddened reflection on the inability of the working classes to express their spiritual needs. He writes as someone who wishes to share with others a moment of revelation; yet he recognizes the limitations of the outsider's perceptions: "the secret of hidden London" will be only "half revealed".

In Workers in the Dawn there is an obsessive concern with the predominance of the morally debased, as opposed to the coarse in self-expression in working-class culture. The opening description, of the Barbican market, contains no indication that Gissing regards those frequenting it as an exceptionally rank group: although much of the novel is set in Whitechapel, among people less close to destitution than those in the Barbican area, there is bestiality in both. Gissing's description of the Lambeth Walk market in Thyrza provides an interesting contrast which helps to illuminate

the essential qualities of each. (1)

The language used to describe the scene in Thyrza is more neutral than that of Workers in the Dawn, for which Gissing selects details and chooses words which create a lurid, slightly sinister effect:

...the street is lined along either pavement with rows of stalls and booths, each illuminated with flaring naphtha-lamps, the flames of which shoot up fiercely at each stronger gust of wind, filling the air around with a sickly odour, and throwing a weird light upon the multitudinous faces. (2)

The description of Lambeth Walk market begins in a more restrained way:

Lambeth Walk is a long, narrow street, and at this hour was so thronged with people that an occasional vehicle with difficulty made slow passage. On the outer edges of the pavement, in front of the busy shops, were rows of booths, stalls and barrows, whereon meat, vegetables, fish, and household requirements of indescribable variety were exposed for sale. The vendors vied with one another in uproarious advertisement of their goods. (3)

In the Barbican scene the buyers are presented as uniformly ignorant and gullible:

See how the foolish artisan's wife, whose face bears the evident signs of want and whose limbs shiver under her insufficient rags, lays down a little heap of shillings in return for a lump, half gristle, half bone, of questionable meat — ignorant that with half the money she might buy four times the quantity of far more healthy and sustaining food. (4)

-
- (1) Cf. descriptions of street markets in Alton Locke (ch.viii) Clarence Rook's 'Young Alf', The Hooligan Nights, 1899, and Sybil (book II, ch.ix, book V, ch.x.).
- (2) Workers in the Dawn, book I, ch.i.
- (3) Thyrza, ch.iv.
- (4) Workers in the Dawn, book I, ch.i.

There is not in Thyrza such a wide gulf between Gissing's response to the scene and that of the people involved in it as there is in Workers in the Dawn. He does occasionally insert a comment on the limitations of the working-classes, sometimes a sharp one:

The market-night is the sole out-of-door amusement regularly at hand for London working people, the only one, in truth, for which they show any real capacity. (1)

However, he does not present the market-shoppers' enjoyment as a sign of their degraded state, as he does in Workers in The Dawn:

It must be confessed that the majority do not seem unhappy; they jest with each other amid their squalor; they have an evident pleasure in buying and selling; they would be surprised if they knew you pitied them. And the very fact that they are unconscious of their degradation afflicts one with all the keener pity. (2)

There is a strong element of revulsion in the pity Gissing expresses here. Revulsion swamps pity in his presentation of the Blatherwicks and Pettindunds. The Blatherwicks enter wholeheartedly into the Whitecross Street celebration

(1) Thyrza, ch.iv.

(2) Workers in the Dawn, book I, ch.i. The assertion that many poor working-class people are not aware of their wretchedness would be dismissed by George Orwell as a "sentimental illusion". In The Road to Wigan Pier he draws a general conclusion about this after seeing from a train a young woman outside her wretched house: It struck me then that we are mistaken when we say that "It isn't the same for them as it would be for us," and that people bred in the slums can imagine nothing but the slums. For what I saw in her face was not the ignorant suffering of an animal. She knew well enough what was happening to her — understood as well as I did how dreadful a destiny it was to be kneeling there in the bitter cold, on the slimy stones of a slum backyard, poking a stick up a foul drain-pipe. (The Road to Wigan Pier, London, 1937, p. 18).

of Christmas, a hideous travesty:

Out of the very depths of human depravity bubbled up the foulest miasmata which the rottenness of the human heart can breed, usurping the dominion of the pure air of heaven, stifling a whole city (1) with their infernal reek.

The use of hell-images in a book about working-class life is not particularly noteworthy: several Victorian writers used such imagery, especially when they wished to communicate a sense of their shocked reaction to the appalling conditions in which the poorest city-dwellers lived. (2)

However, by using such imagery about a group of people Gissing is giving it a particularly cynical twist.

Although he does not use such hyperbolic terms to describe the Pettindunds' Christmas celebrations, he presents them as grossly self-indulgent and vulgar. The treatment of working-class culture throughout the book is informed by the antithesis of flesh and spirit. Carrie Mitchell's sensuality is akin to the grossness of the Blatherwicks and Pettindunds; the only working-class exceptions are those who, like Arthur, are not working-class by descent, or who have imbibed middle-class intellectual culture through books: Samuel Tollady and Will Noble come into this category.

(1) Workers in the Dawn, book I, ch.v.

(2) For examples see Alton Locke, ch.viii (although Sandy Mackaye is also commenting on the immorality of the area), A Child of the Jago, ch.i., and William Booth. In Darkest England and the Way Out (London, 1890), p. 13.

(iv) A Child of the Jago

Arthur Morrison's A Child of the Jago is a study of the influence of the predominant ethos of an area on those who are born into and grow up in it. Although the physical environment is exceptionally poor, Morrison does not draw a direct connection between this and the demoralization of the inhabitants. (An indirect connection is implied: only the very poor or destitute would live in an area such as the Jago, and a population so constituted would include the feckless and fugitives from the law.) The social phenomenon which he perceives is the development of a form of ghetto, in which the demoralized would form an increasingly high proportion of the population, driving out the law-abiding and influencing adversely the mores of those who remained.

One of the many ironies which the novel embodies is that, in a highly developed civilization, the hub, London, contains a community as violent as that of the Jago. Although some of the acts of violence are carried out for material gain, several incidents merely satisfy the primitive emotional needs of the Jagos, individually and collectively. Sally Green attacks Dicky Perrott's mother because she is aloof and retains vestiges of a more genteel life, an outsider to her neighbours. Norah Walsh's retaliation gives her the satisfaction of revenge; and the Learys in turn avenge Sally Green's injuries. Sally's part in the Rann-Leary fight is described in terms of the behaviour of

backward tribes:

Down the middle of Old Jago Street came Sally Green: red-faced, stripped to the waist, dancing, hoarse and triumphant. Nail-scores wide as the finger striped her back, her face, and her throat, and she had a black eye; but in one great hand she dangled a long bunch of clotted hair, as she whooped defiance to the Jago. It was a trophy newly rent from the scalp of Norah Walsh, champion of the Rann womankind, who had crawled away to hide her blighted head, and be restored with gin. (1)

Josh Perrott's fight with Billy Leary satisfies his desire to avenge the ill-treatment of his wife, and the rituals surrounding it suggest that it appeals to the collective psychology of the Jago.

Morrison's portrayal of Dicky Perrott is a slightly uneasy combination of a cool examination of the effect on a child of a demoralized environment, and of an attempt to evoke sympathy for him. (2) He is most successful when he manages to combine both ends by illustrating Dicky's naïveté through the way in which the boy's behaviour reflects that of his elders. One illustration of this is Dicky's conviction that he has done something worthy of praise in stealing the Bishop's gold watch. Morrison's task is relatively easy when a characteristically boyish response is the same as that which the child would show if he had been very much influenced by the moral standards of his area:

(1) Morrison, op.cit., ch.v.

(2) In a Daily News interview Morrison stated his aim in writing the novel as follows:
 I resolved...to write the Child of the Jago which should tell the story of a boy, who, but for his environment, would have become a good citizen...
 (12 December, 1896).

this is the case with Dicky's enthusiasm about the fight between his father and Billy Leary. However, Morrison sometimes lapses into sentimentality.⁽¹⁾ Since there is nothing to suggest that the Perrotts' family life, inadequate though it is, wholly lacks tenderness, Dicky's affection for Looney is plausible. However, his compunction about stealing the Ropers' clock seems gratuitous. There is also a touch of sentimentality in the rôle of Jerry Gullen's "canary", to whom Dicky pours out his sorrows: the combination of weeping child and starving donkey seems forced. Again, a false note is struck when Morrison makes the point that Dicky's honest ambitions are doomed to be thwarted:

The whole world was against him. As for himself, he was hopeless: plainly he must have some incomprehensible defect of nature, since he offended, do as he might, and could neither understand nor redeem his fault. He wondered if it had been so with little Neddy Wright, who had found the world too ruthless for him at ten; and had tied a brick to his neck, as he had seen done with needless dogs, and let himself timidly (2) down into the canal at Haggerstone Bridge.

Morrison is here attributing to Dicky thoughts which are to obviously calculated to arouse the reader's sympathies for him: the hand of the manipulator has strayed into view. Despite these weaknesses Dicky is more convincingly portrayed than Oliver in Oliver Twist, to which Morrison was indebted

(1) Cf. the description of Louey's death:
 ...she looked in the face of the Angel that plays
 with the dead children. (Ch.xiii).

(2) Ibid., ch.xxi.

for many details of his novel; and he has made Dicky a likable character without resorting to the romanticism used by James Greenwood in his story of homeless boys, The True History of a Little Ragamuffin.

Morrison admits in his opening chapter that he has chosen an exceptionally bad plague-spot.⁽¹⁾ However, his use of the Jago as an illustration clarifies without invalidating his thesis. Concentration on one small, overcrowded area also provides him with a useful literary effect by creating a sense of claustrophobia, appropriate to the story of a boy trapped in his environment. The extent of the perversion of values in the Jago is effectively communicated by Morrison's presenting ironically and without moralizing comment the horrifying details of life there. His description of the practice of cosh-carrying is an early, striking example:

Cosh-carrying was near to being the major industry of the Jago...In the hands of capable practitioners this industry yielded a comfortable subsistence for no great exertion. Most, of course, depended on the woman: whose duty it was to keep the other artist going in subjects. There were legends of surprising ingatherings achieved by wives of especial diligence... (2)

(1) His picture is borne out by that of Arthur Osborne Jay, vicar of Holy Trinity, Shoreditch, the Father Sturt of A Child of the Jago. Jay wrote three books which drew heavily upon his experiences here:- Life in Darkest London (1891), The Social Problem and Its Possible Solutions (1893) and A Story of Shore-ditch (1896).

(2) Ibid., ch.1.

(v) 'A Street' and 'Behind the Shade'

Morrison's description of a typical East End street, in his short story entitled 'A Street', replaces the image of foul slums by that of monotonous, ugly rows of mean-looking houses. He concludes:

Where in the East End lies this street? Everywhere. The hundred-and-fifty yards is only a link in a long and mightily tangled chain — is only a turn in a tortuous maze. This street of the square holes is hundreds of miles long. That it is planned in short lengths is true, but there is no other way in the world that can more properly be called a single street, because of its dismal lack of accent, its sordid uniformity, its utter remoteness (1) from delight.

In Morrison's story the appearance of the street reflects the dullness of the lives of its inhabitants. According to his analysis this dullness is compounded of several elements:— the uniformity of patterns of behaviour; the general ignorance of the inhabitants, which ensures that most of them pass their days "seeing nothing, reading nothing, and considering nothing"; and a stultifying notion of respectability:

They are not a very noisy or obtrusive lot in this street. They do not go to Hyde Park with banners, and they seldom fight. It is just possible that one or two among them, at some point in a life of ups and downs, may have been indebted to a coal and blanket fund; but whosoever these may be, they would rather die

(1) Morrison, 'A Street', Macmillan's Magazine (October, 1891), reprinted with alterations in Tales of Mean Streets (London, 1894).

than publish the disgrace, and it is probable that they very nearly did so ere submitting to (1) it.

Morrison's account of the fate of a young woman from the country illustrates the narrow-minded and uncharitable springs of the respectability of the majority of inhabitants in the street. Before the young countrywoman's husband died, she used to sing; and, we are told, the other women did not think much of her. The most contemptuous is a widow who sets much store by appearances and who is, therefore, particularly distressed to meet the young countrywoman as she, the widow, is coming out of a pawn-shop. What passes for respectability in the mean streets has little to do with considered values: it is a stiff-necked pride. The self-destructive nature of such pride is illustrated in 'Behind the Shade'. Morrison shows little sympathy for the mother and daughter who starve themselves to death rather than let it be known that they are poor and in need of help. We see them only from the outside, as they were known by the neighbours, with whom they had no communication. The outward appearances are unflattering: Miss Perkins is "a scraggy, sharp-faced woman of thirty or

(1) Ibid. See also Gissing's description of Islington in Demos (1888):

To walk about a neighbourhood such as this is the dreariest exercise to which man can betake himself; the heart is crushed by uniformity of decent squalor; one remembers that each of these dead-faced houses, often each separate blind window, represents a "home", and the associations of the word whisper blank despair. (Ch.iii).

so, whose black dress hung from her hips as from a wooden frame..."⁽¹⁾ Her cramped meanness of spirit epitomizes the mean streets which dominate Morrison's East End.

(vi) All Sorts and Conditions of Men

In All Sorts and Conditions of Men Besant sees as the major evil of East End life the absence of the educative and pleasure-giving influences of art and literature, although he presents the deprivation in much broader terms when he first characterizes the East End in his novel:

Two millions of people, or thereabouts, live in the East End of London. That seems a good-sized population for an utterly unknown town. They have no institutions of their own to speak of, no public buildings of any importance, no municipality, no gentry, no carriages, no soldiers, no picture-galleries, no theatres, no opera—they have nothing. It is the fashion to believe that they are all paupers, which is a foolish and mischievous belief, as we shall presently see. Probably there is no such spectacle in the whole world as that of this immense, neglected, forgotten great city (2) of East London.

There are some inconsistencies in Besant's treatment of the cultural revivication of the East End, stimulated in his novel by Angela Messenger's philanthropy. The

(1) 'Behind the Shade', Tales of Mean Streets.

(2) Besant, All Sorts and Conditions of Men (London, 1882), ch.1.

In The People of the Abyss Jack London challenged the image of the East End as a place of monotony rather than of great squalor and poverty:

It should be called The City of Degradation. (The People of the Abyss, London, 1903, p. 128, Fitzroy edition, 1962. All subsequent quotations will be from this edition.)

novel as a whole turns upon the assumption that East Enders will benefit if they are encouraged to enjoy artistic, sporting and literary activities; yet a comment by Besant about Harry Goslett undermines this presupposition:

In his ignorance he pitied and despised those people, not knowing how rich and full any life may be made, whatever the surroundings and even without the gracious influences of Art. (1)

The most unconvincing feature of the novel is the hiatus between the presentation of Whitechapel as culturally dead (using "culture" in Besant's sense) and the idealistic message which the book carries, that salvation lies in the establishment of a Palace of Delight, in which the working people of Whitechapel will practise arts and cultivate their own interests:

"Think," said Harry, almost in a whisper, as if in Homage to the Powers of Dirt and Dreariness, "think what this people could be made if we could only carry out your scheme of the Palace of Delight."

"We could make them discontented, at least," said Angela. "Discontent must come before reform."

"We should leave them to reform themselves," said Harry. "The mistake of philanthropists is to think that they can do for people what can only be done by the people. As you said this morning, there is too much exhorting." (2)

There is no logic in the argument: if East Enders are as culturally barren as Besant suggest, it is absurd to expect them to be culturally self-sufficient at once. Moreover, the kinds of activity proposed for the Palace of Delight

(1) Besant, op.cit., ch.iii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xii.

are intended to make people refined and cultivated: they arise from a different social environment and would have to be taught to the working classes by outsiders. (1)

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE AND SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

The language of the struggle for existence did not enter the history of thought with Charles Darwin's particular contribution to evolutionism. In Darwinism in the English Novel (1940) Leo J. Henkin points out that Erasmus Darwin had used it of the animal and plant worlds in Phytologia (1800). The idea that human life was a struggle for existence because of the tendency of the population to multiply rapidly in geometrical progression became current after the publication of An Essay on the Principle of Population (1798) by Malthus. The concept of the struggle for existence and some of its attendant Darwinian developments, such as the theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest, provided late nineteenth-century writers about the working classes with useful terminology. In his book In Darkest England and the Way Out William Booth comments:

In the struggle of life the weakest will go to the wall, and there are so many weak. The fittest, (2) in tooth and claw, will survive.

(1) These activities include dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, skating, cycling, rowing, acting, gardening, painting, drawing, china-painting, novel-writing, and "the laws of beauty in costume".

(2) Booth, op.cit., p. 44.

It is possible to find many examples of the use of such terminology in Jack London's The People of the Abyss.

He comments on the tendency of the best workers to move out of the East End, leaving the weakest behind:

This constant selection of the best from the workers has impoverished those who are left, a sadly degraded remainder, for the great part, which, in the Ghetto, sinks to the deepest depths. (1)

In a chapter on the children of the East End, London comments;

In such conditions the outlook for children is hopeless. They die like flies, and those that survive, survive because they possess excessive vitality and a capacity of adaptation to the degradation with which they are surrounded. (2)

In this section of the chapter I shall examine aspects of the fictional treatment of the working classes and the urban environment which reflect evolutionary or specifically Darwinian concepts. The examination will be divided into two parts:

- (i) The Survival of the Fittest:- examples of the imagery of the struggle for existence as it affects the working classes in their environment.
- (ii) Slum Types:- the portrayals of three characters who are presented as "slum types" in that they have become adapted to the slum environment in which they live.

(1) London, op.cit., p. 131.

(2) Ibid., p. 163.

(1) The Survival of the Fittest

In his book Outcast London (1971) G. Stedman-Jones adduces evidence that belief in a theory of urban degeneration was widespread in late-Victorian Britain. The main element in the theory was the tenet that the born Londoner was unable to compete against the rural immigrant, who had much more physical stamina. Stedman-Jones discredits the theory but points out its importance in articulating middle-class feeling:

It can now be seen that the theory of urban degeneration bore little relation to the real situation of the London casual poor in the late Victorian period. What it provided, was not in fact an adequate explanation of London poverty, but rather a mental landscape within which the middle class could recognize and articulate their own anxieties about urban(1) existence.

Gissing is one of the writers who uses a popular version of this current social theory as the medium for expressing his feelings about the degraded urban poor.(2) In The Nether World he describes children swarming in the most squalid London streets as "bald, red-eyed, doughy-limbed abortions in every stage of babyhood, hapless spawn of diseased humanity, born to embitter and brutalise yet further the lot of those who unwillingly gave them life."(3)

(1) G. Stedman-Jones, Outcast London (Oxford, 1971), p. 151.

(2) See also Besant, Children of Gibeon (London, 1886), prologue, part 1:

The London air...produces in the second and all succeeding generations, a diminishing effect... This does not have any significant influence on Besant's presentation of working-class characters in the novel.

(3) The Nether World, ch.xv.

There is a hint of the notion of the degeneration of the urban poor in his description of working-class adults enjoying themselves on a Bank Holiday. Although he attributes some of their ugliness to deformities created by poor working conditions, he cannot account entirely in this way for their characteristics:

Observe the middle-aged women; it would be small surprise that their good looks had vanished, but whence comes it they are animal, (1) repulsive, absolutely vicious in ugliness?

In both cases Gissing expresses revulsion and disgust; and the phrase "absolutely vicious in ugliness" communicates a sense of connection between physical and moral degeneration.

The Nether World contains exemplifications of much in Henkin's definition of the "literature of regressive evolution or degeneration":

The literature of regressive evolution or degeneration represents man as essentially an animal, endowed with consciousness and intellect that serve simply to make him aware of the cruelty of the world and the futility of existence...Man's life on earth is represented as largely a battle in which the beautiful and humane and fine natures are driven to the wall by the small-minded, the mercenary, the rapacious, (2) or more ruthlessly efficient.

Three groups of characters illustrate central aspects of Gissing's presentation of the struggle for existence in what he describes as the "nether world". Before looking

(1) Ibid., ch.xii. In this chapter Gissing also expresses sadness that the working-classes, enjoying themselves en masse, should indulge in vulgar pleasures and present an impression of degradation.

(2) Henkin, op.cit., p. 223.

at these characters, I shall define the qualities of the environment in which he places them.

Gissing conceives of the nether world as entirely separate from the upper. He describes it as if it were a stretch of the earth's surface with growths peculiar to itself:

The putrid soil of that nether world yields other forms besides the obviously blighted and sapless.⁽¹⁾

It is like Jack London's "abyss" in that the social is quite as important as the geographical location. It is populated not solely by the abandoned and destitute — there are many fine social distinctions within it — but it is the world of the urban working classes for whom the struggle for existence is the cardinal fact of life, as Sidney Kirkwood realizes after his marriage to Clara:

As a younger man, he had believed that he knew what was meant by the struggle for existence in the nether world; it seemed to him now as if such knowledge had been only theoretical. Oh, it was easy to preach a high ideal of existence for the poor, as long as one had a considerable margin over the week's expenses; easy to rebuke the men and women who tried to forget themselves in beer-shops and gin-houses, as long as one could take up some rational amusement with a quiet heart. Now, on his return home from labour, it was all he could do not to sink in exhaustion and defeat of spirit. ⁽²⁾

It is a world from which it is difficult to escape: Clara Hewett tries to do so, but without success. In the nether world there are more stumbling-blocks than there are outside it:

(1) The Nether World, ch.i.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxxix.

In the upper world a youth may "sow his wild oats" and have done with it; in the nether, "to have your fling" is almost necessarily to fall among criminals. (1)

Moral judgements must be relative: Margaret Hewett had one virtue "which compensated for all that was lacking — a virtue merely negative among the refined, but in that other world the rarest and most precious of moral distinctions — she resisted the temptations of the public-house". (2)

Mrs. Peckover and Clem are "mercenary" and "rapacious", in Henkin's terms. Gissing's introductory remarks about Clem bring her within the concept of regressive evolution. She shows a cruel side to her nature in her dealings with Jane Snowdon:

The exquisite satisfaction with which she viewed Jane 's present misery, the broad joviality with which she gloated over the prospect of cruelties shortly to be inflicted, put her at once on a par with the noble savage running wild in woods. Civilisation could bring no charge against this young woman; it and she had no common criterion. Who knows but this lust of hers for sanguinary domination was the natural enough issue of the brutalising serfdom of her predecessors in the family line of the Peckovers? (3)

Clem and her mother resemble vultures in their attitudes to Mrs. Peckover's mother-in-law, whose death "had plunged mother and daughter into profound delight, partly because they were relieved at length from making a pretence of humanity to a bed-ridden old woman, partly owing to the

(1) Ibid., ch.vi.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., ch.i.

fact that the deceased had left behind her a sum of seventy-five pounds, exclusive of moneys due from a burial club."⁽¹⁾ They are so ruthless that they show neither sentimentality nor loyalty in their relationship with each other. "The weak who go to the wall" are represented by another mother and daughter, Mrs. Candy and Pennyloaf. Mrs. Candy is engaged in a struggle for her own soul with Mrs. Green, the beer-shop-keeper.⁽²⁾ Both belong to the working classes, but struggle rather than community is the element in which their relationship exists:

The struggle was too unequal between Mrs. Candy with her appeal to Providence, and Mrs. Green with the forces of civilisation at her back. ⁽³⁾

Pennyloaf is described by Gissing as "a meagre, hollow-eyed, bloodless girl of seventeen". Her habitual manner in conversation is subservience; adversity makes her apathetic and prematurely aged:

...all her poor prettiness was wasted under the disfigurement of pains and cares. ⁽⁴⁾

However, it is necessary to look at the characteristics of Sidney Kirkwood and Jane Snowdon to see that The Nether World does not conceive of society in terms of a simple

(1) Ibid.

(2) In Drink and the Victorians (1971) Brian Harrison makes it clear that beer-shops, created by the Beer Act of 1830, were held in low esteem because they were thought to encourage debauchery, and the intoxication of their visitors to lead to rioting. (Ch.iii)

(3) The Nether World, ch.viii.

(4) Ibid., ch.xv.

antithesis between ruthless survivors of the struggle and the weak who sink without putting up any resistance:

Unmarked, unencouraged save by their love of uprightness and mercy, they stood by the side of those more hapless, brought some comfort to hearts less courageous than their own. Where they abode it was not all dark. Sorrow certainly awaited them, perchance defeat in even the humble aims that they had set themselves; but at least their lives would remain a protest against those brute forces of society which fill with wreck the abysses of the nether world. (1)

(ii) Slum Types

A feature of late nineteenth-century writing about working-class life is the emergence of types of character whose attitudes and behaviour clearly reflect a process of adaptation to the environment. Although they have in common powers of resilience, they are variously conceived and presented. Clem Peckover has already been described. Richard Whiteing's "'Tilda" in No. 5 John Street is a gentler portrait. Cleg Kelly, the street arab, and Alf, one of Clarence Rook's "Hooligans", complete the group I shall describe.

(a) Alf. (2)

In describing his encounters with Alf, representing a group of the followers of Patrick Hooligan, Clarence Rook tries to correct some misconceptions about criminal types.

(1) Ibid., ch.xl.

(2) The character Alf appears in three stories by Clarence Rook, 'Young Alf', 'Concerning Hooligans', and 'Billy the Snide'. All were published in The Hooligan Nights (1899).

One of these misconceptions is that they inhabit a low-life world essentially different from working-class communities. He combats this impression by placing Alf and the Hooligans very firmly in a Lambeth setting, and by drawing parallels between their behaviour and that of other groups in society:

Small and compact, the colony is easily organized; and here, as in all turbulent communities, such as an English public school, the leader gains his place (1) by sheer force of personality.

Another illusion which Rook tries to destroy is that criminal types have a bulldog coarseness about them:

The average Hooligan is not an ignorant, hulking ruffian, beetle-browed and bullet-headed. He is a product of the Board School, writes a fair hand, and is quick at arithmetic. His type of face approaches nearer the rat than the bulldog; he is nervous, highly strung, almost neurotic. He is by no means a drunkard; but a very small quantity of liquor causes him to run amuck, when he is not pleasant to meet. Undersized as a rule, (2) he is sinewy, swift and untiring.

He is not, therefore, a glamorous and mysterious low-life figure but a highly efficient organization bent on pursuing his own ends, allowing no wayward feelings to distract him:

"I got meself to fink abart", he said; "and if I went finkin' abart uvver people I shouldn't (3) be no good at this game."

He is perfectly adapted to his way of life:

On the whole, few boys are better equipped by nature for a life on the crooked, and Young Alf (4) has sedulously cultivated his natural gifts.

-
- (1) Clarence Rook, 'Concerning Hooligans' in The Hooligan Nights (London, 1899)
 - (2) Ibid.
 - (3) 'Young Alf'.
 - (4) 'Concerning Hooligans'.

Rook presents Alf dispassionately. He does not make moralizing comments, although Alf is engaged in serious crime: he even refrains from comment when Alf describes knocking down an old lady.⁽¹⁾ By describing himself as "in a sense a pilgrim"⁽²⁾, Rook exalts Patrick Hooligan's haunts into shrines and his followers into disciples: there is no expression of moral outrage. This approach is reinforced by a self-effacing style of reporting in which Rook uses cockney slang and thieves' cant in his own narration.

(b) Cleg Kelly

In Cleg Kelly: Arab of the City (1896) S.R. Crockett takes as his central character a boy who, like Alf, has developed a toughness which keeps him among the survivors:

The Arab of the city possessed all a cat's faculty⁽³⁾ for falling on his feet.

He starts with many disadvantages:

Now Cleg Kelly, by parentage and character, was almost, if not quite, as the mothers of the next social grade said, "the lowest of the low".⁽⁴⁾

However, he becomes rich enough to be a benefactor to the community in which he started life. His physical superiority to the country boy, Kit Kennedy, indicates that he has developed a sharp efficiency of action:

(1) 'Billy the Snide'.

(2) 'Young Alf'.

(3) S.R. Crockett, Cleg Kelly: Arab of the City (London, 1896), ch.xlv.

(4) Ibid., ch.1.

He [Kit Kennedy] did not, indeed, possess the sinewy, gipsy alertness of Cleg Kelly, nor yet the devil's grit...which drove that youth safely through so many adventures. Kit Kennedy was slower, more thoughtful, more meditative. Cleg never by any chance wasted a moment in meditation, so long as there was an opportunity of doing anything. And when he did, it was only that he might again dash the more determinedly and certainly⁽¹⁾ into the arena of action.

His mental agility enables him to call the bluff of the General for whom he later works. He is admired by the author for his spirit, not condemned for his unlawfulness: this is particularly noticeable in the early episode in which Cleg tries to commit arson.

However, Crockett creates a literary context for Cleg wholly different from that in which Rook places Alf. The book is written as a series of adventures and is an entertainment rather than a sociological study, such as Rook's stories are. Even when Cleg's behaviour reflects the mores of his environment, as it does in his fight with Kit Kennedy, he is first presented as an actor in a farce and then, after his swimming feat, as a hero-figure. His family background, which is both materially and morally poor, makes his rise to fortune seem startling, even a little bizarre; and the resolution of the story, in which Cleg inherits money from Theophilus Ruff, is escapist. Crockett's approach differs from Rook's in a second important respect. Alf's adaptation to his environment is more

(1) Ibid., ch. liii.

logical and more hardening than Cleg Kelly's. Crockett allows Cleg to show a generosity and capacity for tender feeling, apparently inherited from his mother. His instinctive goodness is given larger-than-life expression in some of Cleg's actions; and the narrative comments draw attention to it ponderously:

There had been few happier days in Cleg Kelly's life, than this on which he spent half of his week's wage for the benefit of the Kavannahs. (1)

(c) Matilda

Whiteing's "'Tilda", the flower-girl in No. 5 John Street, is like James's Millicent, a daughter of the city. (2) She has to make the strangeness of the countryside real to herself by relating it to her urban experience:

We stroll on to new beauties - a village, which she instantly reconciles to experience as something out of a play, and which in truth, though perfectly real, does seem just a little too bright and good (3) for everyday uses.

Her face reflects the kind of adaptation she has had to make in order to be able to live equably:

In our civilisation such faces mark those who live their lives from day to day, with no yesterdays (4) and no tomorrows...

Whiteing implies that she has acquired or inherited a savage strength which enables her to hold her own in the struggle for existence. She represents a reversion to an earlier type of womankind, and is described in terms similar to those

(1) Ibid., ch.xii.

(2) See p. 318.

(3) Whiteing, No. 5 John Street (London, 1899), ch.xxviii.

(4) Ibid., ch.vi.

which Gissing uses of Clem Peckover:

The devil is in her defiant port - the devil of scorn, passion, and self-will. It is a devil of the back streets, and its manner and expressions are not so choice as those of the sorrowing head of the firm who is in personal attendance on May-fair...She is Boadicea, skipping centuries of time - Boadicea...no "British warrior queen" of nursery recitation, but a right-down "raughty gal," leading her alley to battle against the Roman "slops"... The ferocity of these types of womanhood is the (1) secret of their enduring charm.

Whiteing's choice of images suggests that Matilda has become conformed to an environment in which self-expression is unsubtle and physical strength counts; and indeed she first appears in the novel as the victim of an attack by a sailor.

Whiteing compares 'Tilda with young women of his own class and pronounces in her favour. The only area in which he concedes to them any superiority is in refinement of manner, and even this is heavily qualified:

It is odiously ungrateful, but there seems no "bite" in their pretty ways, their soft voices, their allusive turns of phrase. One gets all of a twitter with it, and feels clean outclassed in a set of proprieties in which there is no chance of taking the lead...It is no better when they condescend to one's own level in the coarser arts. Their slang is baby talk. Their calculated impertinence is not the (2) real article.

He sees 'Tilda and her like as less inhibited by pressures to live up to a standard of gentility:

But this hen of the walk of our slum is really (3) herself in all her effects.

Whiteing uses this comparison to offer a general statement about a distinctive working-class cast of mind and modus operandi.

(1) Ibid., ch.ix.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxiii.

(3) Ibid.

CHAPTER III

WORKING-CLASS COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

In the first part of this chapter I shall examine two ways of presenting working-class courtship, each determined by the level of awareness and type of moral sensibility of the characters involved. I shall look first at novels and stories, mainly from the late nineteenth century, in which the courtship is distinctively working class, is presented largely through details of patterns of behaviour, and is characterized by a low level of awareness or moral refinement, or both. I shall go on to examine two relationships which exemplify a different attitude and approach - those of Mary Barton and Jem Wilson, and Sidney Kirkwood and Jane Snowdon (The Nether World). We are not made continuously aware of the working-class backgrounds of the characters, and they show a degree of sensitivity which enables the author to present them through analysis of thought and feeling. The second half of the chapter will concentrate on working-class marriages. In it I shall deal with major preoccupations (not necessarily exclusive to the working classes):- Marriage, Cohabitation and Adultery; Drunkenness and Brutality; Money and the Working-class Marriage; and Dominance and Subordination.

COURTSHIP

(1) Courtship Patterns in Working-class Life

In The People of the Abyss Jack London remarks on

his sense of moving into a strange world, among alien people, when he travels to the East End:

...the region my hansom was now penetrating was one unending slum. The streets were filled with (1) a new and different race of people.

Courtship among the working classes is seen as notably strange by some late nineteenth-century writers. Arthur Morrison writes in 'A Street':

Lads and lasses, awkwardly arm-in-arm, go pacing up and down this street, before the natural interest in marbles and doll's houses would have left them in a brighter place. They are "keeping company"; the manner of which proceeding is indigenous-is a (2) custom native to the place.

He points out to the reader, ignorant about the customs, that there are several distinct stages in the courtship — walking out, buying the ring, becoming engaged — each with its tacit conventions:

When by these means each has found a fit mate (or thinks so), a ring is bought, and the odd association becomes a regular engagement; but this is not until the walking out has endured for many months. The two stages of courtship are spoken of indiscriminately as "keeping company", but a very careful distinction is drawn between them by the parties concerned. Nevertheless, in the walking out period it would be almost as great a breach of faith for either to walk out with more than one, as it would be if the full (3) engagement had been made.

Whiteing, in No. 5 John Street identifies "keeping company" with "walking out" only, but the pattern of courtship is the

-
- (1) London, The People of the Abyss (London, 1903), p. 19.
 - (2) Morrison, 'A Street', Tales of Mean Streets (London, 1894) cf. Kipling, 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot' (1890):
With rare fidelity she listened to no proposals for a second marriage according to the customs of Gunnison Street, which do not differ from those of the Barralong.
 - (3) 'A Street'.

same, even though the terminology is differently used:

...it is well understood in John Street that keeping company pledges the parties to nothing on either side. It is a mere trial for the (1) larger venture of an engagement.

The effect of such explanations as I have quoted above is to remind the reader of the distance between him and the characters of the story. It usually indicates that the courtship is characterized by a low level of articulation or by shallowness of feeling, but there are variations in emphasis which can be identified by reference to specific examples.

One of the crudest courtship-relationships in nineteenth-century fiction is that of Lizerunt and Billy Chope in Morrison's story 'Lizerunt'. Morrison describes its inception as follows:

His conversation with Lizerunt consisted long of perfunctory nods; but great things happened this especial Thursday evening, as Lizerunt, making for home, followed the fading red beyond the furthest end of Commercial Road. For Billy Chope, slouching in the opposite direction, lurched across the pavement as they met, and taking the nearer hand from his pocket, caught and twisted her arm, bumping her against the wall.

"Garn", said Lizerunt, greatly pleased: "le" (2) go!" For she knew that this was love.

Failure to articulate feelings verbally does not necessarily indicate emotional shallowness: in The Rainbow (1915)

(1) Whiteing, No. 5 John Street (London, 1899), ch.xiii.

(2) 'Lizerunt', section i, Tales of Mean Streets, Morrison, op. cit. This story was first published, in part, in the National Observer, 22 July 1893.

Lawrence makes it clear that Tom feels powerfully and deeply but that he "did not want to have things dragged into consciousness".⁽¹⁾ After his marriage to Lydia Lensky much is communicated between them through the medium of silence:

There was over the house a kind of dark silence and intensity, in which passion worked its inevitable conclusions. There was in the house a sort of richness, a deep, inarticulate interchange which made other places seem thin and unsatisfying. Brangwen could sit silent, smoking in his chair, the mother could move about in her quiet, insidious way, and the sense of the two presences was powerful, sustaining. The whole intercourse was wordless, intense and close. (2)

But the verbal inarticulateness of the relationship between Chope and Lizer is an indication of emotional paucity. Both accept unquestioningly the assumption of that part of the working-class community to which they belong that a girl must be "walking out" if she is not to feel at a disadvantage

(1) Lawrence, The Rainbow (London, 1915), ch.iv.

(2) Ibid., ch.iv.
 Cf. (i) Walter Greenwood, Love on the Dole (1933). In his treatment of the relationship between Harry and Helen, Greenwood fails to perceive the distinction between the capacity to feel deeply and the capacity to articulate feelings. While trying to suggest that Harry has difficulty in expressing his feelings, he destroys any sense that he feels deeply at all; yet the impact of the novel's treatment of the effects of unemployment and poverty on family life depends partly on our believing that such a character as Harry is a sentient being.
 (ii) Gissing, The Nether World (1889). Gissing comments on the failure of articulation among working-class people, even in their intimate relationships, but he suggests that the circumstances of slum life are a significant factor: The poor can seldom command privacy; their scenes alike of tenderness and of anger must for the most part be enacted on the peopled ways. It is one of their misfortunes, one of the many necessities which blunt feeling, which balk reconciliation, which enhance the risks of dialogue at best semi-articulate. (Ch.x.).

among her peers. After describing Chope's first advance to Lizer, Morrison comments:

The bloke had come at last, and she walked home with the feeling of having taken her degree. She had half assured herself of it two days before, when Sam Cardew threw an orange peel at her, but went away after a little prancing on the pavement. Sam was a smarter fellow than Billy, and earned his own living; probably his attentions were serious; but one must prefer the bird in hand. (1)

Morrison sees the young woman's response as mindless conformity to the patterns of behaviour prevalent in the community.⁽²⁾ There is a difference between this and fictional courtships, in which the importance of finding a suitable marriage-partner is assumed, but the choice is a rational and responsible one. Lizer is interested only in whoever can satisfy her desire for pleasure and material things, and her "choice" of Billy Chope is based on nothing more substantial than his buying her a hat while Sam Cardew is out of action as a result of his fight with Chope:

As for Billy, why, he was as good as another; and you can't have everything; and Sam Cardew, with his bandages and his grunts and groans, was no great catch after all. (3)

As the story develops, Morrison sways our sympathies towards Lizer, but in the first part, which describes the wooing, there is no suggestion that she has any more refinement of feeling than Chope.

(1) 'Lizerunt', section 1.

(2) There is a comparable situation in Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1958). Doreen readily accepts Arthur Seaton's company in order to counter the teasing of her fellow-workers in the hairnet factory.

(3) 'Lizerunt', section 1.

Comparison between 'Lizerunt' and Liza of Lambeth reveals slight but significant variations in the basic courtship patterns.⁽¹⁾ Lizerunt is presented as "a beauty" but described in terms which imply that conceptions of beauty are relative to social class:

...she was something of a beauty. That is to say, her cheeks were very red, her teeth were very large and white, her nose was small and snub, and her fringe was long and shiny; while her face, new-washed, (2) was susceptible of a high polish.

She is oddly dressed "in an elaborate and shabby costume, usually supplemented by a white apron".⁽³⁾ Liza Kemp is altogether more stylish, although Maugham makes much of her fringe as a badge of her class⁽⁴⁾:

It was a young girl of about eighteen, with dark eyes, and an enormous fringe, puffed-out and curled and frizzed, covering her whole forehead from side to side, and coming down to meet her eyebrows. She was dressed in brilliant violet, with great lappets of velvet, and she had on her head an enormous black hat covered with feathers. (5)

Maugham's Liza is a more intelligent character than Morrison's: her repartee is wittier and more articulate, and she usually handles her mother shrewdly and responsibly. There is little verbal exchange between Jim Blakeston and Liza, but Maugham does not claim for the relationship the depth which Lawrence

(1) The relationship between Liza and Jim Blakeston will be discussed in the section on Marriage, Cohabitation and Adultery.

(2) 'Lizerunt', section i.

(3) Ibid.

(4) In 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot' Kipling refers to "the heavy fluffy fringe which is the ornament of the costermonger's girl."

(5) Maugham, Liza of Lambeth (London, 1897), ch.1.

attributes to that between Tom Brangwen and Lydia:

They hardly spoke at all through these evenings, for what had they to say to one another? Often without exchanging a word they would sit for an hour with their faces touching, the one feeling on his cheek the hot breath from the other's mouth... (1)

Maugham recognizes that major factors in the relationship are physical attraction and Blakeston's dissatisfaction with his marriage to a woman who has lost her attractiveness through child-bearing. However, there is a tenderness absent from the relationship between Lizerunt and Chope. Maugham's language sometimes borders on mawkishness when he evokes the warmth of feeling between them:

...their partings were never ending - each evening Jim refused to let her go from his arms, and tears stood in his eyes at the thought of the separation. (2)

The rough horseplay in the courtship of Liza and Blakeston is characteristic of accounts of courtship in novels and stories in which violence is a significant part of working-class life. In the relationship between Liza and Blakeston the roughness is at first good-natured and a sign of the physical attraction between them:

He looked at her a moment, and she, ceasing to thump his hand, looked up at him with half-opened mouth. Suddenly he shook himself, and closing his fist gave her a violent, swinging blow in the belly.

"Come on," he said.

And together they slid down into the darkness of the passage. (3)

(1) Maugham, op.cit., ch.ix.

(2) Ibid., ch.ix.

(3) Ibid., ch.vii.

Billy Chope's approach to Lizerunt begins with his twisting her arm and knocking her against a wall; and in No. 5 John Street Whiteing sees the horseplay between 'Tilda and Low Covey as a sign of their growing intimacy. All these stories are set in a background in which violence is by no means rare. In No. 5 John Street it is not closely associated with courtship or marital relationships. However, in the stories by Morrison and Maugham the line between boisterous behaviour during courtship and the violence of antagonism in domestic relations is sometimes crossed. Violence is also the means by which jealousy against courtship rivals is expressed. Mrs. Blakeston attacks Liza Kemp and, in 'Lizerunt', Chope attacks Sam Cardew during the Bank Holiday outing to Wanstead Flats. Hurt pride rather than possessive love impels the aggressors. Morrison presents the fight between Cardew and Chope with the detachment of a curious observer, noticing that even in this fight there is a code, but one which does not do much credit to the community in which it has evolved:

Punch you may on Wanstead Flats, but execration and worse is your portion if you kick anybody except your wife. (1)

Gissing suggests that Clem's violence against her rival, Pennyloaf Candy, is a sign of Clem's peculiar and extreme maliciousness:

In the nether world this trifling dissension might have been expected to hear its crop of violent language and straightway pass into oblivion; but Miss Peckover's malevolence was of no common stamp... (2)

(1) 'Lizerunt', section i.

(2) Gissing, op.cit., ch.viii.

However, Lizerunt accepts the attack on Cardew as nothing out of the ordinary; she even feels that it is a triumph for her.

Despite variations in emphasis, these late nineteenth-century novels and stories which present working-class courtships through the patterns of behaviour evolved by the community do not assume a deep level of feeling or a capacity for articulating feeling: on the whole they present only crude verbal exchanges and outward behaviour. They are set in exclusively working-class environments, though not always in the East End.⁽¹⁾ Ignorance and violence are found to varying degrees in courtship relations, as in the element in which they grow. Stories such as 'Lizerunt' and Liza of Lambeth are among the most interesting late-nineteenth-century treatments of working-class courtship because they show courtship patterns reflecting their host environment, but it would be misleading to suggest that sombreness prevailed in all fictional treatments of the subject. Although lacking in depth, some stories by Cockney School writers are worthy of brief mention because they communicate a different impression of working-class courtship from those already examined.

The social settings and customs are often the same, but the tone is different. In the stories of the Cockney School there is pathos and melodrama, and the presentation assaults the reader's emotions. In 'Lost for Love' by Brayshaw

(1) Whiteing's No. 5 John Street deals with a slum street situated between two main roads in the West End.

(Slum Silhouettes) pathos and melodrama combine in the story of a young man who gives up everything for a fickle woman and becomes a drunken beggar. Often the tone is humorous, free from emotional intensity and moralizing comment, but sometimes condescending towards the working-classes. An illustration is provided by Adcock's 'Too Clever by Half' in Slum Silhouettes: it concerns a young costermonger from Spitalfields who loses his prospective wife after taking another girl on the costers' outing to Southend. It is presented as a humorous, not a tragic, situation, and the working-class characters show a capacity for uninhibited enjoyment and vulgar fun which does not threaten to degenerate into brutality. There is some physical violence in 'Helen of Bow' (East End Idylls), but in its context it is harmless and is used to create a humorous effect. The Helen of the title is attracted by two contrasting young men, an auctioneer's clerk, George, who is "pale, diffident, and afflicted with a nasty, interesting cough"⁽¹⁾, and a green-grocer's assistant, Wat, who appeals to her "sneaking feminine admiration of manly strength and beauty and the more heroic attitude of things."⁽²⁾ When Wat attacks George in a fit of jealousy, he is demonstrating his "manly strength", not his potential as a wife-beating husband." Finally, it is important to note that there is sometimes a venture into a more serious treatment of courtship.

(1) Adcock, 'Helen of Bow', East End Idylls (London, 1897).

(2) Ibid.

This is true of Ridge's handling of Mord Em'ly's relationship with Henry (Mord Em'ly), but he does not achieve any depth. He is more successful with the character of the devoted Ballard, admirer of Mrs. Galer in Mrs. Galer's Business. In both books the attempt to introduce a serious element is uncertainly executed because the predominant note in each, particularly in Mord Em'ly, is jocular.

(ii) Moral Refinement in Working-class Courtships

(a) Mary Barton and Jem Wilson

Mrs. Gaskell examines not the outward patterns but the psychology of Mary's relationship with Jem. Her analysis reveals much in Mary's reactions that is not determined by her working-class background: her resistance to her elders' wish that she should marry Jem is the natural response of a young woman who is vain and independent in spirit. Mary's moral refinement is at first less well established than that of her working-class suitor, her friend Margaret, and Will Wilson; and Margaret is understandably disconcerted when she first hears about Mary's relations with Harry Carson:

To tell the truth, she was surprised and disappointed by the disclosure of Mary's conduct, with regard to Mr. Henry Carson. Gentle, reserved, and prudent herself, never exposed to the trial of being admired for her personal appearance...Margaret had no sympathy with the temptations to which loveliness, vanity, ambition, or the desire of being admired, exposes so many; no sympathy with flirting girls, (1) in short.

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, Mary Barton (London, 1848), ch.xxii.

However, Mrs. Gaskell suggests that Margaret is particularly austere, and she is at pains to point out that Mary's behaviour and attitudes are no worse than those of many a pretty young woman.⁽¹⁾ After referring to Mary's ambition, which caused her to favour Mr. Carson as a suitor, Mrs. Gaskell makes a comment which evokes sympathy for her by predicating her attitude of the whole human race:

Such is the contrariness of the human heart, from Eve downwards, that we all, in our old-Adam state, (2) fancy things forbidden sweetest.

Even Mary's need to rationalize her preference for Harry Carson is seen by Mrs. Gaskell as evidence that she has a better nature, which, in conflict with her vanity and ambition, leads to confused thinking:

One of Mary's resolutions was, that she would not be persuaded or induced to see Mr. Harry Carson during her father's absence. There was something crooked in her conscience after all; for this very resolution seemed an acknowledgement that it was wrong to meet him at any time; and yet she had brought herself to think her conduct quite innocent and proper, for although unknown to her father, and certain, even did he know it, to fail of obtaining his sanction, she esteemed her love-meetings with Mr. Carson as sure to end in her father's good and happiness. But now that he was away, she would do nothing that he would disapprove of; no, not even (3) though it was for his own good in the end.

(1) Wanda Neff in Victorian Working Women (1929) refers to the apprentice dressmaker's reputation for vanity. (P. 125 in Cass edition, 1966).

(2) Mary Barton, ch.vii. Mrs. Gaskell is using here a technique extensively used by George Eliot, particularly in Middlemarch (1871-72), where she brings Casaubon and Bulstrode within the range of sympathy by reminding her readers of their affinities with these two men.

(3) Mrs. Gaskell, op.cit., ch.viii.

Jem is not therefore to be regarded as absurdly idealistic in thinking of Mary as "a lady by right of nature"⁽¹⁾, especially as she erases the impression made by her earlier conduct when she shows remorse and a more mature judgement.

Jem Wilson's claim to be described as morally refined is indisputable. Unlike Billy Chope, he has a responsible attitude to his work and to the need to be able to provide financially for Mary before asking her to marry him. He treats Mary respectfully, unlike Harry Carson, who trifles irresponsibly with her. After describing Mary's rejection of Jem's proposal, Mrs. Gaskell draws a comparison between the two men which defines Jem's attitudes precisely:

And now Mary had, as she thought, dismissed both her lovers. But they looked on their dismissals with very different eyes. He who loved her with all his heart and with all his soul, considered his rejection final. He did not comfort himself with the idea, which would have proved so well founded in his case, that women have second thoughts about casting off their lovers. He had too much respect for his own heartiness of love to believe himself unworthy of Mary; that mock humble conceit did not enter his head. He thought he did "not hit Mary's fancy"...

Mr. Carson, as we have seen, persevered in considering Mary's rejection of him as merely a (2) "charming caprice".

Jem's approach to his rival is courteous, and, although he resorts to violence against him, he does so in retaliation

(1) Ibid., ch.xiv. The distinction between natural superiority and superiority of birth is important in inter-class personal relationships. See chapter IV below.

(2) Mrs. Gaskell, op.cit., ch.xii.

for the blow he receives. After the reconciliation between himself and Mary, he shows the delicacy of a person sensitive to the feelings of others: he breaks the truth about Esther's way of life to Mary gently, and he respects her wish not to discuss her father's responsibility for the murder of Harry Carson.

(b) Jane Snowdon and Sidney Kirkwood⁽¹⁾

Gissing's portrayal of these two characters and their relationship shows how the moral refinement of Jane develops under the influence of Kirkwood's scrupulousness.⁽²⁾ His delicacy in personal relations is shown with both Jane and Clara: he decides to marry Clara partly because he has compassion for her, and partly because he feels that, should he marry Jane, he could not worthily occupy the position of trust which would be forced on him by his honouring Michael Snowdon's idealist plans. Gissing presents without irony Kirkwood's scruples about marrying Jane. She fails to understand his thinking, not because he is insensitive, but because she lacks his intellectual subtlety:

Unaltered in his love, he refused to share the task of her life, to aid in the work which he regarded with such fervent sympathy. Her mind was not subtle enough to conceive those objections to Michael's idea which had weighed with Sidney almost from the first, for though she had herself

(1) Only for a short period does it seem likely that the two will marry.

(2) When Clara Hewett renews her acquaintance with him after returning home, she responds more positively than before to his slight bluntness of manner, which "reminded her of the moral force which she had known only as something to be resisted; it was now one of the influences that drew her to him." (Ch.xxxii).

shrunk from the great undertaking, it was merely in weakness — a reason she never dreamt of attributing to him. (1)

On the other hand his decision to marry Clara brings unhappiness to Jane and to himself and indicates that he has not the shrewdness to penetrate her actress's façade. Despite these qualifications Gissing clearly wishes us to see Kirkwood as evidence that some working-class men and women are capable of showing sensitivity in their personal relationships. The fact that Kirkwood, as an artisan, is at the top of the hierarchy within the working classes can be only a partial explanation: Bob Hewett is a skilled workman, but he shows no sensitivity in his personal relations. Gissing does proffer another explanation for the difference between Kirkwood and Bob Hewett: good fortune saved Kirkwood from a fate which might easily have befallen him and did befall Hewett. His salvation was the impact on him of his father's unexpected death:

His bereavement possibly saved Sidney from a young-manhood of foolishness and worse. In the upper world a youth may "sow his wild oats" and have done with it; in the nether, "to have your fling" is almost necessarily to fall among criminals. The death was sudden; it affected the lad profoundly, and filled him with a remorse (2) which was to influence the whole of his life.

Such a comment is a reminder of the fragility of the spiritual well-being of the inhabitants of the nether world.

(1) Ibid., ch.xxxiii.

(2) Ibid., ch.vi.

In his delineation of Jane Snowdon Gissing makes some important distinctions. She is not educated, in an intellectual sense, but she has moral refinement, as Gissing makes clear when he refers to the "delicacy of her instincts, and the sympathies awakened by her affection".⁽¹⁾ The difference between Jane's sensibility and the characters of the girls with whom she works in an artificial-flower factory is perceptible in the rough laughter:

What sweet laughter it was! How unlike the shrill discord whereby the ordinary workgirl expresses her foolish mirth! ⁽²⁾

He makes the same perception more explicit in his comment on the difference between Jane's laughter and that of Bessie Byass:

This instinct of gladness had a very different significance from the animal vitality which prompted the constant laughter of Bessie Byass; it was but one manifestation of the moral force which made itself nobly felt in many another way. ⁽³⁾

How does Gissing account for Jane's refinement?

His conception of the nether world allows for the existence within it of a number of types of life:

The putrid soil of that nether world yields other forms besides the obviously blighted and sapless. ⁽⁴⁾

Since Jane is one of the "blighted and sapless", however, and the only "other form" introduced at this stage in the book is Clem Peckover, she seems to be doomed to be ineffectual.

(1) Ibid., ch.xxv.

(2) Ibid., ch.xvi.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid., ch.i.

But the novel expresses strongly an environmental approach to character; and Sidney Kirkwood's presence in Jane's social environment is responsible for effecting her rescue. The morally damaging effects of Clem Peckover's ill-treatment of her are cancelled out by the beneficial effects of contact with Kirkwood's thoughtful and self-disciplined character:

She had been rescued while it was yet time, and the subsequent period of fostering had enabled features of her character, which no one could have discerned in the helpless child, to expand (1) with singular richness.

However, circumstance alone does not determine the course of Jane's moral development. Unlike Clara Hewett, she does not allow pride to overwhelm affection, and she is therefore more responsive to Kirkwood's influence.

Gissing's treatment of the relationship between Jane Snowdon and Sidney Kirkwood shows a more socially deterministic approach to character than Mrs. Gaskell's in Mary Barton. Here the influence of a specific social milieu appears to be less important in determining attitudes and behaviour than are the responses shared with others, whatever their class. In Mrs. Gaskell's world moral sensitivity is not underestimated, but its development is less precariously dependent on circumstances than in The Nether World.

(1) Ibid., ch.xv.

MARRIAGE(i) Marriage, Cohabitation and Adultery

Charles Booth saw clear patterns of marriage and cohabitation among those who came within the scope of his investigations:

Legal marriage is the general rule, even among the roughest class, at any rate at the outset in life; but later, among those who come together in maturer years, non-legalized cohabitation is far from uncommon, and this irregular relationship is commented upon not always to its disadvantage. It is even said of rough labourers that they behave best if not married to the women with whom they live. (1)

The pattern of lawful marriage, followed by desertion by the husband, who goes to live with another woman, is an important element in two late nineteenth-century stories, 'The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot' by Kipling and Gissing's 'Lou and Liz' (1893). Lou and Badalia are young working-class wives abandoned by their husbands after the birth of a baby, which in both cases subsequently dies. Both young

-
- (1) Booth, Life and Labour of the People in London, 3rd ed. (London, 1902-3), Final Volume, p.41. Cf. A Child of the Jago, ch.xxx. According to Morrison, legal marriage was rare in the Jago, and when it did take place it was a casual affair:

Dicky was not married, either in the simple Jago fashion or in church. There was little difference, as a matter of fact, so far as facility went. There was a church in Bethnal Green where you might be married for sevenpence if you were fourteen years old, and no questions asked — or at any rate they were questions answers whereunto were easy to invent.

Morrison is not necessarily more cynical than Booth: the slight difference in emphasis is attributable to Morrison's claim to be writing about an exceptionally demoralized area.

women show a resilience which enables them to remain cheerful and to help others: Badalia is an unofficial social worker in Gunnison Street, and Lou helps to support Liz, whose own earnings from the domestic manufacture of tooth-picks barely enable her to keep herself and her illegitimate child. Badalia's resilience seems to be a mature development of the fun-loving, exhibitionist streak in her nature, memorably shown on her marriage:

In the beginning of things she had been unregenerate; had worn the heavy fluffy fringe which is the ornament of the costermonger's girl, and there is a legend in Gunnison Street that on her wedding-day she, a flare-lamp in either hand, danced dances on a discarded lover's winkle-harrow, till a policeman interfered, and then Badalia danced (1) with the Law amid shoutings.

The buoyancy of Liz and Lou also arises from the slum-girl's capacity for enjoyment, and it retains a hedonistic quality:

In their way they had suffered not a little, these two girls. But the worse seemed to be over. With admirable philosophy they lived for (2) the day, for the hour.

The high spirits expresses itself in outbursts of song, boisterousness, and quick repartee which sometimes develops into quarrelsomeness but never destroys their relationship. This emphasis on the girls' resilience does not deflect sympathy from them, but it does prevent the stories from developing into sentimental pathos.

(1) Rudyard Kipling, *Badalia Herodsfoot*, Harper's Weekly (November 15-20, 1890), reprinted in Many Inventions (London, 1893). Cf. Liza's exhibitionism, Maugham, *op.cit.*

(2) Gissing, 'Lou and Liz', the English Illustrated Magazine (August, 1893), reprinted in A Victim of Circumstance (London, 1927).

The main differences between 'Badalia Herodsfoot' and 'Lou and Liz' lie in the methods of presenting the deserting husbands and in the thematic development from the common starting-point defined above. 'Badalia Herodsfoot' develops into an analysis of domestic brutality, a theme sufficiently widely treated in fiction to merit a section of the chapter on its own. But Gissing remains with the issue of legal and "common-law" marriage. He shows Lou clinging pathetically to what she regards as the respectability accorded to her by the possession of marriage-lines, even though her marriage has been found invalid and her husband an imposter. There is pathos here, mingled with awareness that Lou must be a little naïve to delude herself thus.

Gissing does not attempt to trace the thoughts and feelings of Lou's husband, a shifty character who applies his unsubtle wits to the evasion of awkward situations. On the other hand, Kipling exposes to the reader the simple logical processes of the thinking of Tom Herodsfoot, a more ignorant and blundering character than his counterpart in 'Lou and Liz'. Kipling writes as follows about Tom's desertion of Jenny Wahstow, for whom he left Badalia:

...no very public scandal had occurred till Tom one day saw fit to open negotiations with a young woman for matrimony according to the laws of free selection. He was getting very tired of Jenny, and the young woman was earning enough from flower-selling to keep him in comfort, whereas Jenny was expecting another baby, and most unreasonably expected consideration on this account.

The shapelessness of her figure revolted him, and he said as much in the language of his breed. (1)

The effect of Kipling's approach is to extend our awareness, but not to close any gaps in sympathy. Kipling is adopting this method because he is aware that Tom is remote from the reader's understanding and that this ignorance is the result of class division and differences. In Tom Herodsfoot Kipling is writing about a character whom he regards as a representative figure, as is indicated by the use of such phrases as "the law of his kind" and "the language of his breed". However, Tom is an ignorant and debased working man, and the extent to which his attitudes and behaviour may be generally applied is made clear. (2)

Jim Blakeston in Liza of Lambeth is less debased than Tom Herodsfoot. Although he is tempted to abandon his wife and children to live with Liza, he yields easily to Liza's restraining arguments, and he is an affectionate father. Liza's adulterous relationship with Blakeston is presented sympathetically by Maugham, who makes Liza attractive, both physically and in character, and Mrs. Blakeston unattractive in every way. Her physical unappealingness is partly the result of child-bearing, but it also derives from

(1) Kipling, op.cit. Cf. 'Lizerunt', section ii, and The Nether World, ch.xxix. Both Chope and Bob Hewett are annoyed about the birth of a child.

(2) Tom Herodsfoot is a more brutalized character than the generality referred to in Booth's comment, quoted at the beginning of this section.

her failure to perceive what style of hair and clothes are inappropriate for her:

...she wore a black cloak and a funny, old-fashioned black bonnet; then examining the woman herself, she [Liza] saw a middle-sized, stout person anywhere between thirty and forty years old. She had a large, fat face, with a big mouth, and her hair was curiously done, parted in the middle and plastered down on each side of the head in little plaits. (1)

Maugham's choice of blunt and unflattering adjectives suggests that he is trying to reproduce Liza's reaction, but there is enough ambiguity about the narrative voice here to support the view that he expects the reader to share it. (2) The crudity of Mrs. Blakeston's retaliation devalues a little the attitudes of the women who support her. Maugham lays bare the instinctive nature of their reaction. Their husbands are generous to Liza, but the women show no mercy because Mrs. Blakeston's revenge is, vicariously, their own:

(1) Maugham, op.cit., ch.v.

(2) Cf. Henry Nevinson, 'The St. George of Rochester', Neighbours of Ours (Bristol, 1894). Although ostensibly a story about the relationship between Timmo and someone outside his class, it says as much about working-class marriage as about an inter-class relationship. Timmo finds in Erith what he fails to find in any of his three marriages to women of his own class, who become prematurely aged through childbearing and domestic cares. Nevinson's narrative is self-effacing in that the account is ostensibly that of a neighbour of Old Timmo's, a packer in the city. It is his voice which speaks in the comment on Mrs. Moore:

Stout and red she was, 'avin' a lot o' children,
for all not bein' old yet.

See also The Nether World, ch.xv, in which Jane visits Pennyloaf, already dragged down by her responsibilities; and Little Dorrit, book I, ch.xii, where Dickens presents Mrs. Plornish as follows:

...Mrs. Plornish was a young woman, made somewhat slatternly in herself and her belongings by poverty; and so dragged at by poverty and the children together, that their united forces had already dragged her face into wrinkles.

"...a woman's got no right ter tike someone's 'usbind from 'er. An' if she does she's bloomin' lucky if she gits off with a 'idin' — thet's wot I think."

"So do I. But I wouldn't 'ave thought it of Liza. I never thought she was a wrong 'un."

"Pretty specimen she is!" said a little dark woman, who looked like a Jewess. "If she messed abaht with my old man, I'd stick 'er — I swear I would!"

"Now she's been carryin' on with one, she'll try an' git others — you see if she don't."

"She'd better not come round my 'ouse; I'll (1) soon give 'er wot for."

Their judgement seems particularly harsh in view of the fact that Liza has more commonsense and moral awareness than Blakeston. This emerges in their discussion about the possibility of living together:

"I wish I was straight," she said at last, not looking up.

"Well, why won't yer come along of me altogether, an' you'll be arright then?" he answered.

"Na, that's no go; I can't do thet." He had often asked her to live with him entirely, but she had always refused.

"You can come along of me, an' I'll tike a room in a lodgin' 'ouse in 'Olloway, an' we can live there as if we was married."

"Wot abaht yer work?"

"I can get work over the other side as well as I can 'ere. I'm abaht sick of the wy things is goin' on."

"So am I; but I can't leave mother."

"She can come too."

"Not when I'm not married. I shouldn't like 'er ter know as I'd — as I'd gone wrong."

(1) Maugham, op.cit., ch.xi.

"Well, I'll marry yer. Swob me bob, I wants ter badly enough."

"Yer can't; yer married already."

"Thet don't matter! If I give the missus so much a week aht of my screw, she'll sign a piper ter give up all clime ter me, an' then we can get spliced..."

Liza shook her head.⁽¹⁾

Liza is aware of, and sad about, her deviation from her own and the community's moral code. She has a sense of the obligations attaching to relationships, and sees her responsibility to her mother not merely as a financial one, but also as an obligation to protect her mother's feelings, even though her mother has failed to set her an example of sensitivity to others. The conversation also shows that she is practical and realistic in urging Blakeston to consider the problem of getting work, and in recognizing the impossibility of such an arrangement with his wife as he naïvely suggests.⁽²⁾

Like Maugham in Liza of Lambeth, Nevinson in 'Sissero's Return' also detaches himself from the collective opinion of the working-class community, when they pass judgement on Ginger, wife of the negro, Sissero. She has already stepped out of line by marrying an outsider. She does so again

(1) Ibid., ch.x.

(2) Cf. Alan Sillitoe's treatment of Arthur Seaton's adultery in Saturday Night and Sunday Morning. Sillitoe is not as detached from Seaton as Maugham is from Liza; and Sillitoe's approach is indulgent to the point of being amoral.

according to the overt standards of the community by prostituting herself to the Jewish rent-collector while her husband is away. Although the more objective neighbours invoke economic necessity as an excuse for her, those most affected by jealousy condemn her deviation from respectability:

"All I've got to say is as she's a disgrace to our sex, and it's nothink but right as 'er lawful 'usband should know it." (1)

Nevinson's presentation of the neighbours suggests that he dissociates himself from them because the source of many of their judgements is prejudice, ignorance or jealousy. He also vindicates Ginger by presenting her as an example of a rare fidelity, despite her technical infidelity through her relationship with the rent-collector. Nevinson does not suggest that her relationship with her husband is shallow.

(ii) Drunkenness and Brutality

The stereotyped characters and situations in Brayshaw's Slum Silhouettes and Adcock's East End Idylls are useful guides to what were regarded as familiar features of working-class life: the husband or wife who destroys a marriage by drinking to excess, and a close connection between drunkenness and domestic violence are two such situations. I shall examine fictional treatments of these two related aspects in three sections: the first draws together Hard Times and two stories from East End Idylls; the second examines details

(1) 'Sissero's Return', Nevinson, op.cit.

from 'Badalia Herodsfoot' and Liza of Lambeth, which present drunkenness and violence as familiar features of working-class culture; and the third concentrates on 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', which views the drunken propensities of the husband as part of a wider revelation.

'Dicky Notton's Top Floor', 'An Interrupted Romance' and Hard Times (1854) draw attention to the inequitable divorce laws by creating a situation in which a working-class marriage-partner wishes to escape from a drunken husband or wife.⁽¹⁾ There is a pattern common to all these: the innocent partner is morally irreproachable, and the pervading emotion is pathos. In Hard Times this is created by the fact that Stephen Blackpool and Rachael never become husband and wife and also remain physically chaste. Adcock is bolder in that he presents Nellie as free from the taint of immorality even though she lives with a man other than her husband, who drinks and beats her. The pathos in the story is concentrated in Nellie's suicide, to which she is driven by malicious gossip. In 'An Interrupted Romance' there is a more bizarre touch: the working-class woman, abandoned by

(1) In 1850 a Royal Commission on Divorce Law Reform was appointed. It estimated that the cost of obtaining a divorce was at least £700-£800. Many of its recommendations became law in 1857 in the Matrimonial Causes Act, which made the civil system of divorce more widely available. Although the procedure was cheaper under the new act, it was still too costly for most working-people. The position of the unhappily-married working-class man or woman was eased slightly by Lord Penzance's Matrimonial Causes Act, 1878, which gave magistrates' courts power to grant a separation order with maintenance to a wife whose husband had been convicted of an aggravated assault upon her. Brutality among working-class husbands was given much publicity in the 1870's. See O.R. McGregor, Divorce in England (London, 1957), p. 22.

her husband, meets a reliable workman who wants to marry her; but, rather than run the risk of committing bigamy, she advertises for her husband in three continents, with the result that he returns, unreformed. In no case is there an analysis of the drift into drunkenness: the drunken husband or wife is a "given" feature of the situation.

'Badalia Herodsfoot' and Liza of Lambeth also assume a close connection between drunkenness and brutality. Of the two Kipling's is the more satisfactory treatment; contrivance is too overt in Liza of Lambeth. Although Sally's marriage has a promising start, it is not long before her husband beats her after having too much to drink. The comment of Sally's mother presses into generalization the particular example of Sally's experience:

"A little drop too much! I should just think 'e'd 'ad, the beast! I'd give it 'im if I was a man. They're all just like thet — 'usbinds is all alike; they're arright when they're sober — sometimes — but when they've got the liquor in 'em, they're beasts, an' no (1) mistike."

Moreover, shortly after Sally's misfortune is mentioned, Jim Blakeston is verbally and physically aggressive to Liza, after drinking. It is not inconceivable that he would treat Liza like this, and an explanation of his behaviour on this particular occasion is provided. But placed where it is, this episode seems to be intended primarily to reinforce the point made by Maugham's account of Sally's experience of marriage.

(1) Maugham, op.cit., ch.x.

Kipling's story concentrates on Herodsfoot and Badalia and keeps generalization about domestic brutality unobtrusive, though not insignificant. Two comments reinforce the impression that Tom's behaviour to Jenny — he beats her before leaving her — is common in his social milieu. When Jenny herself appears in the street drunk, Kipling remarks:

"When your man drinks, you'd better drink too! It don't 'urt so much when 'e 'its you then," says the Wisdom of the Women. And surely (1) they ought to know.

When Jenny appeals to a policeman for help, his cool reply is explained by his familiarity with the situation:

"Well, if you are a married woman, cover your breasts," said the policeman soothingly. He was (2) used to domestic brawls.

Although the conclusion of the story is theatrical, Kipling's account of the stages leading to it provides an insight into Tom's mind, showing how readily he turns to drinking as a means of escaping from his problems, and how easily his drunkenness develops into violence against his wife. The first stage is his public humiliation:

He had whacked the woman because she was a nuisance. For precisely the same reason he had cast about for a new mate. And all his kind acts had ended in a truly painful scene in the street, a most unjustifiable exposure by and of his woman, and a certain loss of caste — this he realized dimly — among his associates. Consequently, all women were nuisances, (3) and consequently whisky was a good thing.

(1) Kipling, op.cit.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

The process of rationalization, whereby Tom convinces himself that he has the right to demand money from his wife Badalia, is assisted by drink, according to Kipling's analysis:

There is much virtue in a creed or a law, but when all is prayed and suffered, drink is the only thing that will make clean all a man's (1) deeds in his own eyes.

The strength of Tom's purpose enables him to make his way to Gunnison Street, where Lascar Loo's mother, who thinks she has cause to hate Badalia, reinforces his belief in his wife's culpability; and when Badalia resists his attempts to extort the money he now knows she possesses, the whisky combines with frustration to make him violent:

The wave that had so long held back descended on Tom's brain. He caught Badalia by the throat and forced her to her knees. It seemed just to him in that hour to punish an erring wife for two years of wilful desertion; and the more, in that she had confessed her guilt by refusing (2) to give up the wage of sin.

Both the working-class setting and the influence on the Bates' marriage of the husband's propensity for drink are forcefully realized in Lawrence's 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. The setting is evoked through a variety of details:- the dominating colliery, the speech of the neighbours, the suggestion of routines peculiar to the miner's household in a reference to Elizabeth's work on a "singlet" of cream coloured flannel to her husband. The nature of the miner's job provides the central situation, the pit accident in which

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

Bates is killed. Although Bates does not appear in the story alive, we have a clear picture of his habits and a strong sense of Elizabeth's weariness of spirit and her bitterness about her husband's behaviour. She is pre-occupied with the thought that he might be drinking instead of coming home to his family; and chrysanthemums, far from smelling beautiful to her, remind her of the scourge of her marriage:

"...the first time they ever brought him home drunk, he'd got brown chrysanthemums in his button-hole." (1)

Even when she learns that he has been involved in an accident in the pit, she cannot forget her husband's drinking. One of his mother's remarks to Elizabeth implies that he has caused his wife much anxiety:

"...there's no mistake he's been a handful of trouble, he has! I hope the Lord'll spare him to mend his ways. I hope so, I hope so. You've had a sight o' trouble with him, Elizabeth, you have indeed." (2)

Her "trouble" includes the embarrassment of being the subject of the neighbours' gossip. Both Elizabeth's father and the Ripleys suggest that her husband might be in a public-house: their domestic life is clearly not private.

There are two main differences between Lawrence's treatment of a working-class husband's drunkenness and that

(1) Lawrence, 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', the English Review (June, 1911), reprinted in The Prussian Officer (London, 1914).

(2) Ibid. What is implied about Bates' behaviour is represented in the portrayal of Morel in Sons and Lovers (1913).

of the other writers mentioned in this section. The thematic core of the story, Lawrence's analysis of Elizabeth's reaction to the death of her husband, is handled in terms of universal experience, not that peculiar to one social class:

She was a mother - but how awful she knew it (1)
now to have been a wife.

The ideal marriage-relationship, perceived by Elizabeth on her husband's death, is one which transcends class boundaries. Moreover, Lawrence does not assume a gap between his characters' level of response and that of his readers. The perceptions which Lawrence wishes us to share are Elizabeth's perceptions; her sensibility is the medium through which the situation is interpreted:

She had denied him what he was — she saw it now. She had refused him as himself. And this had been her life, and his life. She was grateful to death, which restored the truth. (2)

(iii) Money and the Working-class Marriage

The claims of the marriage of convenience as opposed to marriage for love are examined in Victorian novels which deal with middle-class courtship and marriage: Edith Dombey, Grace Melbury and Gwendolen Harleth are three examples of women whose marriages are entered upon for money or prestige and who are unhappy in consequence. Catherine Arrowpoint and Athel resist or escape family pressures and marry for

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

love. The conflicting claims are not so important in treatments of purely working-class marriages, but they appear in a rudimentary form in some novels.

One of Gissing's images of the nether world is of a working-class hierarchy, with the artisan who wears a collar at the top. Bob Hewett, as a die-sinker, is at the top of the hierarchy, and his marriage to Pennyloaf Candy is a descent socially:

John Hewett would have nothing to do with an alliance so disreputable; Mrs. Hewett had in vain besought her stepson not to marry so unworthily. Even as a young man of good birth has been known to enjoy a subtle self-flattery in the thought that he graciously bestows his name upon a maiden who, to all intents and purposes, may be said never to have been born at all, so did Bob Hewett feel when he put a ring upon the scrubby finger of Pennyloaf Candy. (2)

Gissing provides a pessimistic account of the effects of such a marriage, since it leads, indirectly, to Hewett's moral as well as his social descent.

D.H. Lawrence shows how, when anxiety about money is close to the surface of a working-class marriage, it breaks out in moments of crisis and reduces a marriage-relationship to a matter of economics. This happens in 'A Sick Collier' when Willie, in his hysteria, says that he wants to kill his wife. Her dominating anxiety is:

(2) The Nether World, ch.xii.

If it gets about as he's out of his mind, they'll (1)
stop his compensation, I know they will.

When Elizabeth Bates learns that her husband has been involved in a pit accident, fears for her husband's well-being do not exclude anxiety about money:

If he was killed — would she be able to manage on the little pension and what she could earn? (2)
— she counted up rapidly.

However, 'Lizerunt' presents in Billy Chope a character who is driven not only by crisis into seeing his wife as an economic unit: he does so habitually and to the exclusion of all other ways of regarding her. His decision to marry her is based on her capacity to earn money:

His was the chief reason for rejoicing.
For Lizerunt had always been able to extract ten shillings a week from the pickle factory, and it was to be presumed that as Lizer Chope (3)
her earning capacity would not diminish.

His assault on Lizer is provoked by her inability to bring in money because she is expecting a baby. The extent to which Chope's attitude abuses both the individual and the marriage-relationship is illustrated by the resolution of the story, in which Lizer is turned into the street to earn money by prostitution. (4) Morrison perceives no mitigating

(1) Lawrence, "A Sick Collier", the New Statesman (13 September, 1913), reprinted in The Prussian Officer.

(2) 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'.

(3) 'Lizerunt'.

(4) The same pattern is to be found in 'Badalia Herodsfoot', where Tom Herodsfoot returns to his wife because he wants money from her. Her failure to supply him with his demands leads to brutality, from which he is not restrained by any awareness of her as a person.

circumstances in Billy's case. The fact that he lives in an environment in which people have to struggle for a livelihood is insignificant beside his outrageous attitudes and behaviour. As a woman Lizer is both more vulnerable physically and more burdened with responsibility for domestic management and for the care of children. Moreover, Morrison presents Chope as a parasite, who relies on his wife and mother to earn money for the three of them. His parasitism is particularly repellent because he wants the money only for his own pleasures. (1)

Booth quotes a comment by a nurse about the responsibility within a working-class marriage for domestic management:

"A decent man earning 25s. a week will give 20s. to his wife. She ought to be able to, because in many cases she does, feed four children, dress them and herself, and pay rent out of this. The 5s. is kept by the man for his beer and tobacco, and sometimes he pays for his own dinner out of it. After a certain minimum it depends more on the wife than on the amount of money, whether the home is comfortable, and the children decently fed and dressed." (2)

The "decency" of a working-class husband is evaluated largely by his readiness to give his wife money for the food and clothing of the family; and the working-class housewife may be assessed by her ability to manage the domestic finances.

(1) There is no excuse for Clem Peckover's grasping in her marriage to Joseph Snowdon: it is presented as mere avarice. Dickens treats Bumble's marriage to Mrs. Corney as a sign of a grasping materialistic spirit, and he metes out poetic justice to him. (But cf. the middle-class Lammles in Our Mutual Friend.)

(2) Booth, op.cit., p. 87.

Gissing applies to his characters in the nether world the criterion of responsible and sensible household management, and he finds Pennyloaf and her husband lacking in the qualities required. But he is mild in his judgement of Hewett, who is not interested in his domestic responsibilities. Again, he tempers criticism by alluding to the importance of making judgements relative to the social environment:

Bob was not incapable of generosity; his marriage had, in fact, implied more of that quality than you in the upper world can at all appreciate. He neglected his wife, of course, for he had never loved her, and the burden of her support was too great a trial for his selfishness. (1)

Gissing shows through this relationship a vicious circle, perception of which contributes to our sense of the nether world as a treadmill from which it is difficult to escape. Hewett is not interested in his domestic responsibilities because Pennyloaf cannot make her home or herself attractive to him; and when she tries to do so her efforts are inept. Yet, as Gissing points out, nothing in her home life provides her with an ideal and a model. (2) Failure in domestic management is seen by Mrs. Gaskell as one of the effects of the employment of women and girls in mills and factories: in Mary Barton Jane Wilson recalls that immediately after her marriage she was a poor domestic manageress because she had worked as a factory girl. (3) The effects of the comments by Mrs. Gaskell and Gissing are very different in their contexts. As Mrs. Gaskell attributes them to Jane Wilson, they

(1) The Nether World, ch.xxiv.

(2) Discussed by Jane and Kirkwood, ch.xvi.

(3) Mrs. Gaskell, op.cit., ch.x.

do not appear to constitute a hostile judgement by the middle class upon the working class. However, Gissing supports his portrayal of Pennyloaf by authorial generalizations which do not speak of confidence in the working-class woman's ability to "manage". Of Margaret Hewett he says:

Mrs. Hewett's constant ill-health...would have excused defects of housekeeping; but indeed the poor woman was under any circumstances incapable of domestic management, and therein (1) represented her class.

Moreover, the working-class families on whom Mrs. Gaskell concentrates have a well-ordered domestic life, although in North and South she shows us a poor manageress in John Boucher's wife.

Perhaps the best examples in nineteenth-century fiction of a husband and wife who come to terms with poverty cheerfully and harmoniously are Mr. and Mrs. Cratchit and Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, who are just outside the terms of reference of this study by virtue of their social position. However, the Plornishes provide a muted version of harmonious if not cheerful endurance of poverty. The co-operative account of the Plornishes' acquaintance with Little Dorrit is indicative of their sharing of experience. The capacity of the working-class husband and wife to face poverty without becoming hardened against each other is one of the assumptions behind the writing of the novelists of the Cockney School.

(1) The Nether World, ch.vi.

✓

Ridge's 'The One Meal' (Next Door Neighbours) will help to illustrate the point. Initially there is tension between husband and wife, but it derives from her anxiety about cooking the one large meal of the week, not from a rift between them because of the pressures of poverty. In fact, the husband is no spendthrift, and brings his weekly wage home intact. Only pride makes the housewife a little sharp with her son when he comes in eager to start his meal: she is in fact pleased to have her cooking praised. While the family is eating the meal which she has carefully prepared, she relaxes, and the vignette ends with a cheerful and harmonious domestic scene.

(iv) Dominance and Subordination in the Marriage Relationship.

In some ways the working-class woman was more independent of the man in her family during the period under review than was her middle-class counterpart. In The Age of Equipoise (1964), which concentrates on mid-Victorian Britain, W.L. Burn, writing of middle-class families, comments:

In contrast to the conditions of our own day, when the wages earned and the contributions made by sons and daughters in employment may easily form the bulk of the family income, the head of the family in the mid-century was usually the main if not the sole breadwinner. This necessarily added to his authority, if only on the maxim that he who pays the piper has the right to call the tune...For most of the young women of this class the choice between rejection of and subordination to authority scarcely existed. The dependent daughter was one of the fundamentals on which the mid-Victorian (1) home was based.

(1) W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise (London, 1964), pp. 250-251.

That the working-class woman had some independence because her labour was in demand is reflected in Disraeli's treatment of the factory girls in Sybil.⁽¹⁾ However, the married woman of all classes was at a legal disadvantage throughout the period: a woman could sue in the courts only in her husband's name; and she had no right to the custody of her legitimate children above the age of seven. Moreover, the married working-class woman with children was not a good employment prospect. The vulnerability of the working-class woman has already been illustrated by reference to details in 'Badalia Herodsfoot', 'Lou and Liz' and The Nether World in particular.

The submissiveness of some working-class women in fiction provokes mixed reactions from their creators. Kipling presents without comment Badalia's refusal to divulge the name of her murderous attacker, but an earlier remark on Badalia's fidelity puts her silence in its context:

With rare fidelity she listened to no proposals for a second marriage according to the customs of Gunnison Street, which do not differ from (2) those of the Barralong.

Kipling implies that there is another explanation: despite her co-operation with the middle-class philanthropists who visit Gunnison Street, she is closer to the people of her own class, even to her own erring husband. She adheres to the unwritten code of life in Gunnison Street with the superstitious awe of the inhabitants of the Jago, who

(1) Their independence is exemplified by Caroline and Julia, and by Harriet Warner's separation from her family.

(2) Kipling, op.cit.

unhesitatingly obey the injunction "Thou shalt not mark."

Lizerunt's defence of her brutal husband is another indication of conformity to the cultural pressures of a working-class environment. When the community is attacked from the outside, as it is when the doctor's dispenser ejects Billy Choep for ill-treating his wife, the clan instinct is stronger in Lizer than a sense of her own rights.

Despite the similarities between the two stories, Morrison's treatment of Lizer is more reductive than Kipling's of Badalia, who is a mature character, and sufficiently independent of some of the pressures of convention to put herself in the unique position of philanthropist's assistant.

Lizerunt is incapable of such unconventional behaviour.

Gissing shows a mixture of admiration, pity, and contempt for Pennyloaf. Her devotion to Hewett makes her more alert than she usually is:

Poor slow-witted mortal though she was, a devoted fidelity attached her to her husband, and quickened wonderfully her apprehension in everything that concerned him. (1)

However, she brings out the worst in her husband by being too open in her regard, and she contributes to the harshness of her married lot by failing to assert herself:

Poor Pennyloaf was in a great degree responsible for the ills of her married life; not only did she believe Bob to be the handsomest man who walked the earth, but in her weakness she could not refrain from telling him as much. (2)

(1) The Nether World, ch.xxiv.

(2) Ibid.

Her ineffectualness in her marriage is brought to a sad but fitting end when she unwittingly leads the police to her husband, whom her loyalty has impelled her to seek. Pennyloaf's simple-mindedness is essentially working-class, as Gissing presents it.⁽¹⁾

The dominant wife is a comic literary stereotype of the Cockney School: Ridge's 'Mr. and Mrs. Ranger' (Up Side Streets) and Brayshaw's 'Hooligan's Wake' and 'A Bad Match and a Flare-up' (Slum Silhouettes) provide examples of this group's characteristic presentation of the type. The first two stories have as their central characters a nagging wife and a "henpecked" husband; in the third a scheming and domineering woman meets her match in a womanizer, whom she marries. The characters are presented from the outside, and they are simplified types, whose attitudes and behaviour appeal to stock responses in the reader. The quality which determines the type to which the character belongs is driven home forcefully at the beginning of each story, as the opening of 'Mr. and Mrs. Ranger' shows:

"Wipe your boots well," commanded Mrs. Ranger insistently from the kitchen, "bring your overcoat through to the scullery, 'ang up your hat, and walk quiet."

A large, mild-looking man, with his face set in a frame of light whiskers, came obediently on tip-toe through the passage. Mrs. Ranger, looking up from her desperate work, frowned at her husband.

(1) Cf. Mrs. Gradgrind in Hard Times. Her submissiveness goes beyond the limits of what is acceptable to Dickens because it drives her into negativity. There is both humour and pathos in Dickens' treatment of her.

"Ah!" she said bitterly, as she took a fresh iron from the fire and placed it perilously near to her plump cheek to test its warmth, "I see what you want to do. You want to wake up baby."

"Can't altogether say," replied Mr. Ranger, with the cautious air of one anxious not to irritate by direct contradiction, "as I do." (1) ✓

The main purpose of Brayshaw and Ridge in writing these stories seems to have been to develop a situation into a neatly-turned, humorous resolution: there is no consistent exploration of social issues or of personal relationships. In all three stories the climax is a show-down, or a confrontation between husband and wife. In 'Hooligan's Wake' the brow-beaten husband leaves home after a quarrel, and is found drowned. His wife, who has identified the body, puts on a splendid funeral, into which her "dead" husband innocently walks. 'A Bad Match and a Flare-Up' shows an Irish widow led into marriage by a man who, she learns later, has fathered twins on a local girl. He in turn finds that he has been duped because he has been tricked into believing that her former husband left her money. Moreover, on the wedding-day he discovers that his wife has a cork leg. Ridge's story turns upon a ruse to test the wife's devotion to her husband, a test which she passes. In all three stories the situations and characters arouse no profound issues nor disturbing reflections. There is a mild concession for seriousness in that a trite moral underlies them: 'A Bad Match and a Flare-Up', for example, constitutes a warning about marrying for money.

(1) Ridge, 'Mr. and Mrs. Ranger, Up Side Streets (London, 1903). ✓

The attitude to the working-class characters is patronizing, particularly in the Brayshaw stories. Although the humour is partly situational, it is intensified by the working-class setting. The best example is 'A Bad Match' which creates humour out of the widow's ignorance by attributing to her a misspelt notice which contains an unintentional but apt double entendre:

A RUME TO LETT, OR A SPECTABLE YUN' MAN COULD BE
TOOK IN. (1)

There is a distinction between the social setting of the Brayshaw stories and that by Ridge. Mr. Ranger is the secretary of a workmen's benevolent society and an educated working man; Brayshaw's characters are in poorer circumstances and are more ignorant. The happy ending of 'Mr. and Mrs. Ranger', seen in the context of others by Ridge, presents the working-classes as contented and respectable, in their domestic as well as their wider social circles.

D.H. Lawrence deals with the struggle for dominance between husband and wife in three stories with a working-class setting:- 'Strike-Pay' (1913), 'Her Turn' (1913), and 'The White Stocking' (1914). Occasionally there are surface likenesses between these stories and those of the Cockney School discussed above: 'Her Turn', for instance, shows a wife outwitting her husband in a difference of opinion about strike pay. However, the working-class characters are not treated patronizingly, as if their responses were more naïve

(1) Brayshaw 'A Bad Match and a Flare-Up', Slum Silhouettes (London, 1898).

than those of social superiors. An analytical comment on the marriage of Elsie and Whiston in 'The White Stocking' is only one of many possible illustrations.

In a few weeks, she and Whiston, were married. She loved him with passion and worship, a fierce little abandon of love that moved him to the depths of his being, and gave him a permanent surety and (1) sense of realness in himself.

This quotation illustrates other, related differences between the Lawrence stories and those of the Cockney School. Lawrence explores responses on more than one level, recognizing a complexity in emotion and attitude which means that he avoids stereotyping. In 'Her Turn' there is a battle of wits between husband and wife about the amount of money he gives her while he is on strike, but their relationship exists on a plane other than that of the purely practical: it is instinctive, and, in Mrs. Radford's case, manifests itself in her fascination with her husband's physical presence. Although her ruse succeeds, her emotional reaction is complex because it comes from all levels of her conscious and unconscious self. She watches her "defeated" husband stroking the head of the tortoise:

She stood hesitating, watching him. Her heart was heavy, and yet there was a curious, cat-like look of satisfaction round her eyes. Then she went indoors and gazed at her new cups (2) admiringly.

(1) Lawrence, 'The White Stocking', the Smart Set (October, 1914), reprinted in The Prussian Officer.

(2) Lawrence, 'Her Turn', the Saturday Westminster Gazette (6 September 1913) as 'Strike-Pay I, Her Turn', reprinted in A Modern Lover (London, 1934).

The strength of the bond between husband and wife - because they are husband and wife - is counterpointed in 'Strike-Pay' with the pressures of two other relationships in which Ephraim Wharmby is involved, with his fellow-workers and with his mother-in-law, in whose house he and his wife live after their hasty marriage.⁽¹⁾ The characters and the collective mood of the miners are important to a definition of the state of Wharmby's domestic relations because they represent a pull away from the pressures of the home. The men's high spirits on receiving their strike pay puts them in the mood for an enjoyable jaunt, for which the football match in Nottingham provides them with an excuse. Lawrence distinguishes between the wife's and the mother's responses to Ephraim's return home, short of money because he has lost his stike pay, and the psychological basis of each response is clear and convincing. The mother-in-law, as the owner of the house in which the young couple live after their marriage, sees only the young man's irresponsibility and puts it fluently before him and her daughter, whom she taunts for her subjection to Wharmby:

"If you gi'e him any tea after that, you're a (2) trollops."

-
- (1) In their book Family and Kinship in East London (1957) Michael Young and Peter Willmott point out that in their marriage sample in Bethnal Green twenty-one of the forty-five couples began life in their parental home; and that more than two out of every three people of a general sample of three hundred and sixty-nine married people with one parent alive had their parents living within two or three miles. This is the case in Ridge's story 'A Fair Start' in Next Door Neighbours.
- (2) Lawrence, 'Strike-Pay', the Saturday Westminster Gazette (13 September 1913), reprinted in A Modern Lover.

The daughter goes against her mother's advice, but Lawrence distinguishes between her response and that of the conventionally timid wife:

She attended to him. Not that she was really meek. But - he was her man, not her mother's. (1)

The patterns which emerge from an examination of the presentation of working-class courtship and marriage follow closely those of the treatment of working-class culture. Kipling, Morrison, Gissing and Maugham form a coherent group, despite variations in attitude and presentation, and they and Lawrence stand distinct from the Cockney School of writers. Lawrence's balance of detail about working-class life and universalized experience distinguishes him from the late nineteenth-century writers.

(1) Ibid. Cf. 'The White Stocking' in which the deep feeling between husband and wife is stronger than the damage done to their relationship by Elsie's flirtation with Sam Adams, and 'Fanny and Annie', in which Fanny forgets her pride in her own acquired gentility when she hears of Harry's aberrations. Her passion for him is the strongest impulse in her being.

CHAPTER IVINTER-CLASS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The implications of a marriage or a love-relationship between a working-class person and a social superior interested writers throughout the period 1832-1914.⁽¹⁾ This chapter will be constructed on the basis of a broad distinction between novels in which such relationships are optimistically presented and those in which the emphasis is on the difficulty of crossing class barriers in courtship and marriage. By means of this examination I shall try to answer two main questions:

- (i) If the relationship is "workable", what, in the author's view, helps to overcome the barrier of class?
- (ii) If the relationship is not satisfactory, what are the intractable elements in the situation?

Since this is a chapter about inter-class personal relationships, I shall also examine treatments of the theme of seduction when they involve the actual or threatened seduction of a working-class girl by a man of higher social status.⁽²⁾

SATISFACTORY INTER-CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

I shall look first at relationships which are presented optimistically and examine five means by which writers

-
- (1) Terms such as "inter-class relationships" will be used of those between a working-class man or woman and some-one of the middle class or aristocracy, unless otherwise stated.
 - (2) The converse does not seem to have been worked into a nineteenth-century novel.

have explained and justified their optimism. They may be briefly defined as follows:

(i) Position in the social structure. Mere definition of the exact social positions of the two characters involved indicates that in some cases an author selected a working man or woman of the artisan class or someone of unusual education or personal refinement of manner, thereby obviating the necessity of dealing with some potential problems of relationship. However, as I hope to show, this device frequently stops short of explaining a writer's optimism about a relationship; and not all writers use it.

(ii) Selectivity of presentation. In a few instances, notably W.E. Tirebuck's Miss Grace of All Souls' and D.H. Lawrence's 'Daughters of the Vicar' (1914), working-class characters are presented in a limited number of situations and relationships. Many writers in this group do not deal with the relationship after marriage.

(iii) Moral equality. The moral worthiness of a working-class character is treated as "compensation" for social inferiority. Discussion of this will form a major section of the chapter, and it will concentrate on Felix in Felix Holt (1866), Sybil in Disraeli's novel, Lizzie Hexam in Our Mutual Friend and Ida Starr in The Unclassed.

(iv) Improvement through education. A working-class character is seen as a suitable husband or wife for a social superior after undergoing further intellectual education. This is the case with Thyrza and Lizzie Hexam.

(v) Transcendence of narrow class issues. The issue of class in personal relationships is subordinated to a more broadly based debate on values. I shall illustrate this by an analysis of 'Daughters of the Vicar'.

(1) Social Position

Silas Hocking's Her Benny (1879) and Disraeli's Sybil are on the periphery of novels about inter-class personal relations. The marriage between Benny and Eva Lawrence can barely be described as an inter-class marriage since it follows and marks Benny's arrival in the middle class. The marriage is equated with the beautiful house which Benny owns when he becomes prosperous; it therefore has more the character of a material benefit than of a personal relationship:

He lives in a beautiful house of his own, and the angel that years ago brightened his childhood⁽¹⁾ now brightens his home...

This comment alludes to the time when Eva, as a young girl, had taken pity on Benny the waif and given him a shilling, an incident which is also recalled in Hocking's moralizing verdict on Benny's social rise:

...sometimes on winter evenings he gathers his children around his knee, and shows them a shilling still bright and little worn, and tells them how their mother gave it to him when she was a little girl, and he a poor, ragged, starving boy upon the streets; tells them how, by being honest, truthful, and persevering, he had worked his way through many difficulties, and how, by the blessing and mercy⁽²⁾ of God, he had been kept until that day.

(1) Silas K. Hocking, Her Benny (London, 1879), ch.xxiv.

(2) Ibid.

Benny's marriage, therefore, is merely one of the rewards of virtue in a novel which is a crude exemplum of the self-help ethic.

It is arguable that the marriage between Egremont and Sybil does not come within the terms of reference of this chapter because Sybil is not, as she thinks, a "daughter of the people" but an heiress, the descendant of an ancient line. However, her father is an employee of Mr. Trafford, as an overseer in his mill, and a Chartist leader; and Sybil herself is politically committed to the cause of Chartism until persuaded by Egremont to re-consider her position.

Felix Holt and Thyrsa are firmly identified as working-class characters, but they are at the top of the hierarchy within their class, on different grounds. Felix Holt is a skilled artisan and, until Esther's claim to an inheritance is established late in the novel, she belongs to a relatively poor and unfashionable element of the middle class as the adoptive daughter of a nonconformist minister. However, there are differences in manner which give sharp definition to the class difference between Esther and Felix. Felix's uncouthness is brought home to the reader in George Eliot's account of Mr. Lyon's initial reaction to him:

The minister, accustomed to the respectable air of provincial townsmen, and especially to the sleek well-clipped gravity of his own male congregation, felt a slight shock as his glasses made perfectly clear to him the shaggy-headed, large-eyed, strong-limbed person of this questionable young man, without waistcoat or cravat. (1)

(1) George Eliot, Felix Holt (London and Edinburgh, 1866), ch.v.

His unpolished appearance is matched by a blunt manner and opinions which sound like the stiff-necked attitudes and crudely formulated expressions of a man with strong class prejudices. Esther's preoccupation with manners and taste seems to put her outside the influence of a man such as Felix:

She had one of those exceptional organisations which are quick and sensitive without being in the least morbid; she was alive to the finest shades of manner, to the nicest distinctions of tone and accent; she had a little code of her own about scents and colours, textures and behaviour, by which she secretly condemned all things and persons. And she was well satisfied with herself for her fastidious taste, never doubting that hers was the highest standard. (1)

Esther's fastidiousness is not true delicacy but an expression of her vanity. There is no such suggestion in Gissing's comments on the refinement of manner which sets Thyrza Trent apart from other factory girls and attracts the attention of Walter Egremont, the manufacturer's son:

...numberless little personal delicacies distinguished her from the average girl of her class... (2)

This is partially explained by the fact that she is the daughter of a school teacher and, by virtue of her origins, different from a girl such as Totty Nancarrow, whom Gissing presents as "the average girl of her class". Although Totty is more boyish in appearance and less reflective by nature than Thyrza, she has no moral coarseness: otherwise

(1) Ibid., ch.vi.

(2) Gissing, Thyrza (London, 1887), ch.vi.

Thyrza would not have been drawn to her:

It was a character wholly unlike her own, and her imaginative thought discerned in it something of an ideal; her own timidity and her tendency to languor found a refreshing antidote in the other's breezy carelessness. Impurity of mind would have repelled her, and there was no trace of it in Totty. (1)

That she is one type of Lambeth working girl is implicit in Gissing's brief description of a group into which Totty would fit:

Companies of girls, neatly dressed and as far from depravity as possible, called for their glasses of small beer, and came forth again with merriment in (2) treble key.

Thyrza, Gissing implies, could not be described in terms of the characteristics of a working-class group.

Many of the novels to be examined explore relationships between people who are socially much further apart. In both Miss Grace of All Souls and 'Daughters of the Vicar' a clergyman's daughter marries a miner. Tirebuck dims the contrast a little by creating in Sam Ockleshaw a character given status by his position as chairman of the district branch of the Miners' Federation, but Lawrence creates no distinction of this kind between Alfred Durant and his fellow workers. In Our Mutual Friend Dickens actually emphasizes the wide social gulf between Eugene Wrayburn and Lizzie Hexam by drawing attention to upper- and middle-class dismissal of a union between a lawyer and a "female waterman", the daughter of a man whose livelihood was derived mainly

(1) Ibid., ch.iv.

(2) Ibid.

from the robbery of drowned men. Lady Tippins says to Lightwood:

"Tell me something, immediately, about the married pair. You were at the wedding."

"Was I, by-the-by?" Mortimer pretends, at great leisure, to consider. "So I was!"

"How was the bride dressed? In rowing costume?"

Mortimer looks gloomy, and declines to answer.

"I hope she steered herself, skiffed herself, paddled herself, larboarded and starboarded herself, or whatever the technical term may be, to the ceremony?" proceeds the playful Tippins.

"However she got to it, she graced it," says Mortimer.

Lady Tippins with a skittish little scream, attracts the general attention. "Graced it! Take care of me if I faint, Veneering. He means to tell us, that a horrid female waterman is graceful!" (1)

In Felix Holt the sense of a widening social gap between Esther and Felix is created not only by the discovery that Esther is a deprived heiress but also by the presence of the middle-class Harold Transome as a rival suitor. A similar pattern may be found in The Unclassed. The suggestion that Waymark might marry Maud Enderby draws attention to the class implications of the relationship with Ida Starr. However, there are two factors pulling away from generalization

(1) Dickens, Our Mutual Friend (London, 1864-65), book IV, ch.xvii. The significance of the step Wrayburn has taken in marrying Lizzie may be gauged by reference to the central situation in Gissing's A Life's Morning (1888). Although Mr. Athel the Egyptologist is a cultured and sympathetic man, he does not approve of his son's choice of a governess as a wife. (His son is a student when the book opens, and later becomes a Member of Parliament).

about social relations. Waymark is déclassé and, as a writer, able to see himself as an observer of life rather than an active participant in it within any narrowly defined social rôle: and Ida's importance as a representative working-class figure is limited by Gissing's emphasis on her individuality.

(ii) Selectivity of Presentation

The use of what has been defined as selectivity may be illustrated first from Miss Grace of All Souls' and 'Daughters of the Vicar'. Although Alfred Durant and Sam Ockleshaw both work in a job in which harsh conditions militate against refinement of manners and fastidiousness of language, neither Lawrence nor Tirebuck shows these men in contact with others at work. In both cases the only relationships directly represented are with the mother and with the middle-class young woman each marries. However, since Lawrence's story is about family- and love- relationships, there is no sense of a hiatus; and Tirebuck, who does concern himself with the miner's job, creates other characters who express something of the bluntness of the miner's demeanour and the raciness of his speech.

In most novels in which inter-class relationships lead to marriage, the marriage either takes place at the end of the narrative or is merely predicted. There is, therefore, no necessity for writers to deal with the married relationship and the social position which the cross-class

marriage occupies; but it is sometimes possible to make inferences from the evidence of the novel. In some cases the resolution does not wholly convince.

The marriages of Lizzie Hexam and Eugene Wrayburn and of Ida Starr and Osmond Waymark are not unconvincing resolutions in that the preceding development of the relationships has prepared us for this outcome, though by dint of some idealization and obvious contrivance by both Dickens and Gissing. However, it is difficult to imagine their social rôles, especially that of Lizzie and Wrayburn, because Dickens has made the prejudice of middle-class society against such a marriage abundantly clear. Although the marriage between Felix Holt and Esther is by no means implausible, there may be some uncertainty about the circumstances of their married life. We are told that they will dedicate themselves to the poor, but we see little of these people in the novel; and it is particularly difficult to imagine what form their connection with the workers will take, since Felix's attempt to bring education and culture to the miners of Sproxtton is singularly unsuccessful.

The ending of Thyrza has the air of a romantic evasion. It is conceived in tragic terms, though not because of any failure in the relationship between Walter Egremont and Thyrza. Thyrza dies of grief; she waited two years to marry him, only to find that Mrs. Ormonde considers her an unsuitable wife because she is too refined. Gissing creates the sense that it would be sacrilegious to

call in question the potential happiness of Thyrsa and Egremont, most clearly in a statement by Annabel Newthorpe:

"...you missed the great opportunity of your life when you abandoned Thyrsa. Her love would have made of you what mine never could, even though she herself had been taken from you very soon." (1)

It is possible to regard the impending marriages in Miss Grace of All Souls' and Sybil symbolically; and they are more convincing interpreted thus than if they were read literally. Although concessions are made to the demands of social and psychological realism at some points in Sybil, the novel's terms of reference are political, and the marriage between Egremont and Sybil may be seen as symbolic of an ideal harmony between the aristocracy and the people which is a fundamental tenet of the political philosophy expounded in the book. (Sybil's social identity, however, is not a stable factor). Miss Grace of All Souls' is a polemical novel. In it Tirebuck unequivocally aligns himself with the miners in their dispute with the coal-owners. Grace Waide's marriage to Sam Ockleshaw symbolizes her identification with the miners' cause, of which she has at several points in the novel acted as an articulate and well-informed spokeswoman.

(iii) Moral Equality

Moral values are pitched against social inequality in two main ways: social inferiority in the marriage-partner is

(1) Thyrsa, ch.xli.

counterbalanced by the equality of the two people in moral sensibility; and working-class characters are shown to be capable of fulfilling a role in the writer's conception of an ideal marriage-relationship.

Felix Holt's high-mindedness plays an important part in the development of the narrative and of the underlying moral argument. He and Harold Transome embody the moral polarities of the novel in that George Eliot's detailed contrast of the two illuminates the difference between altruistic and egoistic attitudes to life. Felix is favourably contrasted also with the trade union leader who wants a mechanical transfer of power to the people and expects it to be followed by a magical transformation of their conditions. Felix sees understanding as more important than political power:

"The way to get rid of folly is to get rid of vain expectations, and of thoughts that don't agree with the nature of things". (1)

The moral worth of Felix is reflected in his expression and counteracts the impression of uncouthness which his appearance creates:

Felix Holt's face had the look of habitual meditative abstraction from objects of mere personal vanity or desire, which is the peculiar stamp of culture, and makes a very roughly-cut face worthy to be called "the human face divine". (2)

His moral calibre has a dynamic effect on his relationship with Esther in that under his influence she comes to attach

(1) Eliot, op.cit., ch.xxx

(2) Ibid.

less importance to surface values, good manners and good taste, and to appreciate deeper moral qualities. The extent to which she has changed is tested when she has to choose between marriage to Harold Transome and marriage to Felix. She reacts negatively to Harold's love:

With a terrible prescience which a multitude of impressions during her stay at Transome Court had contributed to form, she saw herself in a silken bondage that arrested all motive, and was nothing better than a well-cushioned despair. To be restless amidst ease, to be languid among all appliances for pleasure, was a possibility that seemed to haunt the rooms of this house, and wander with her under the oaks and elms of the park. And Harold Transome's love, no longer a hovering fancy with which she played, but become a serious fact, seemed to threaten her with a stifling oppression. (1)

Her capacity to choose what is "greatly good" (2) rather than what is elegantly pleasurable is the effect of her spiritual awakening under Felix's influence:

Esther had been so long used to hear the formulas of her father's belief without feeling or understanding them, that they had lost all power to touch her. The first religious experience of her life — the first self-questioning, the first voluntary subjection, the first longing to acquire the strength of greater motives and obey the more strenuous rule — had come to her through Felix Holt. (3)

This treatment of Holt is slightly vitiated by idealization which over-emphasizes Esther's debt to Felix and underrates her beneficial influence in undermining some of his prejudices. However, it is a strong statement of George Eliot's belief in the moral power of the educated working man.

(1) Ibid., ch.xlix.

(2) Ibid.,

(3) Ibid., ch.xxvii.

Sybil does not change Egremont as Felix does Esther, but she is presented as a source of moral inspiration to him, strong enough for her to be deemed worthy to be his wife, despite the apparent social gap between them. Disraeli attributes to Sybil expression of possible objections to their marriage:

"A union between the child and brother of nobles and a daughter of the people! Estrangement from your family, and with cause, their hopes destroyed, their pride outraged; alienation from your order, and justly, all their prejudices insulted. You will forfeit every source of worldly content and cast off every spring of social success. Society for you will become a great confederation to deprive you of self-complacency. And rightly. Will⁽¹⁾ you not be a traitor to the cause?"

However, Disraeli provides several answers to the objections named by Sybil. His presentation of the relationship between Sybil and Egremont is illuminated by Ruskin's definition of an ideal marriage-relationship in his essay 'Of Queens' Gardens':

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can⁽²⁾ give.

Ruskin goes on to distinguish between the characters and rôles of the man and the woman:

(1) Disraeli, op.cit., book IV, ch.xv.

(2) John Ruskin, 'Of Queens' Gardens' in Sesame and Lilies, (London, 1865). Reference to the Library edition, edited by Cook and Wedderburn, vol. XVIII (London, 1905), p. 121, para. 67.

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial; - to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded or subdued; often misled; and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, (1) no cause of error or offence.

Egremont is presented as more realistic politically than Sybil, and as able to back up his attitudes with action when necessary. In their discussions about class relationships Sybil's Chartist attitudes yield to those of Egremont's Young England Toryism. She is influenced not only by his arguments but also by two occasions when he appears as her chivalrous rescuer: when she is imprisoned in connection with Gerard's arrest, and when she is in danger of being hurt by the mob which attacks Mowbray Castle. Sybil complements Egremont by inspiring in him the kind of worship which has affinities with elements in the medieval notion

(1) Ibid., pp. 121-2, para. 68.

of courtly love and with reverence for the Virgin Mary.⁽¹⁾
 Her purity is emphasized by her connection with an order
 of nuns; and her influence on Egremont is made explicit
 when he declares his love to her:

"...from the moment I first beheld you in the
 starlit arch of Marney, has your spirit ruled
 my being, and softened every spring of my
 affections. I followed you to your home, and
 lived for a time content in the silent worship
 of your nature. When I came the last morning
 to the cottage, it was to tell, and to ask,
 all. Since then for a moment your image has
 never been absent from my consciousness; your
 picture consecrates my hearth, and your approval
 has been the spur of my career...I cannot offer
 you wealth, splendour, or power; but I can
 offer you the devotion of an entranced being —
 aspirations that you shall guide — an ambition (2)
 that you shall govern!

In The Unclassed Gissing offers a bold challenge to
 the interpretation of purity and its importance in marriage
 to which Disraeli subscribes. He does so through his pre-
 sentation of Waymark's attitudes to Ida Starr and Maud
 Enderby. Maud and Ida epitomize for Waymark contrasting
 attitudes to life, each of which appeals to him. Maud is
 idealistic, quietist, spiritual; Ida is involved practically
 in social problems, not only because she has been a prosti-
 tute but also because she finds a fulfilling rôle as a

(1) Walter Houghton discusses the phenomenon of "woman
 worship" briefly in The Victorian Frame of Mind (Yale,
 1957), pp. 348-353. He points out that its advocates
 included Kingsley, Ruskin, Tennyson and Patmore, but
 that there were many prominent Victorians who repudiated
 it, among them Carlyle, the Arnolds and J.S. Mill.
 (However, as Houghton admits, Mill's attitude to Harriet
 Taylor is not consistent with his general position.)

(2) Disraeli, op.cit., book IV, ch.xv.

landlord and rent-collector like Octavia Hill. Waymark experiences some anxiety about his relationship with Ida, mainly because at times he feels that her attraction for him is largely sensual, as is the appeal of Carrie Mitchell for Arthur Golding in Workers in the Dawn:

This was not love he suffered from, but mere desire.⁽¹⁾ Maud's more sheltered existence has protected her from witnessing gross depravity; and when she ventures into Litany Lane she faints because she does not have the inner strength to react positively and calmly to what she finds there. When Gissing points out that Waymark realizes that he needs something other than Maud's middle-class conventionality to satisfy the waywardness of his own temperament, he produces an exposé of the weaknesses of the bourgeois ideal of marriage:

He had never known, felt that perhaps he might never know, that sustained energy of imaginative and sensual longing which ideal passion demands. The respectable make-believe which takes the form of domestic sentiment, that every-day love, which, become the servant of habit, suffices to cement the ordinary household, is not the state in which such men as Waymark seek or find repose; the very possibility of falling into it unawares is a dread to them. If he could but feel at all times as he had felt at moments in Maud's presence. It might be that the growth of intimacy, of mutual knowledge, would make his love for her a more real motive in his life. He would endeavour that it should be so. Yet there remained that fatal conviction of the unreality of every self-persuasion save in relation (2) to the influences of the moment.

(1) The Unclassed, ch.xxiii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxvii.

This is in contrast to the ideal in which the home is seen as a haven of peace and security, as described by Ruskin in 'Of Queens' Gardens' :

This is the true nature of home — it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. (1)

Gissing's concept of an alternative to the domestic ideal is not new to nineteenth-century fiction: it was powerfully stated in Wuthering Heights. However, through Waymark's attitudes and relationships Gissing is helping to undermine some cherished early-Victorian ideals. He supports this in The Unclassed with the sad little drama of the Enderbys' family life which is played out in the background and which takes a melodramatic turn when Paul Enderby, his confidence undermined by his unfathful wife, succumbs to the temptations of petty crime. Gissing implies that it is likely that Waymark's marriage to Ida will be more satisfying than this outwardly respectable middle-class union, and that Waymark's ideal passion will be realized in marriage. By making Ida self-sufficient in effecting her own rescue, Gissing makes Waymark's a more mature approach to marriage than that of Arthur Golding, who blurs the ideals of fulfillment in love and marriage with philanthropic concern for the fallen and rejected. This aspect of The Unclassed is not entirely persuasive: it fails as the basis for generalization because Ida is so unrepresentative that the effect is of special pleading; and she is a character who strikes

(1) Ruskin, op.cit., p. 122, para. 68.

the reader as the product of an idealizing imagination rather than of observation.

Lizzie Hexam is also idealized unconvincingly. Although she is wholly at ease performing the hard physical labour required of her as her father's attendant on the river⁽¹⁾, nothing of her background and way of life is reflected in her appearance, manner or speech. She has nothing of her father's coarseness of moral fibre, despite being exposed to few influences other than his and that of his partner, Rogue Riderhood. There is no clear theoretical explanation of the distinction between Lizzie's response to her environment and that of Pleasant Riderhood, whose disenchanted view of life is presented as if it derived from the constant influence of her father:

For, observe how many things were to be considered according to her own unfortunate experience. Show Pleasant Riderhood a Wedding in the street, and she only saw two people taking out a regular licence to quarrel and fight. Show her a Christening, and she saw a little heathen personage having a quite superfluous name bestowed upon it... Show her a live father, and she saw but a duplicate of her own father, who from her infancy had been taken with fits and starts of discharging his duty to her, which duty was always incorporated in the form of a fist or a leathern strap, and being discharged hurt her. All things considered, therefore, Pleasant Riderhood was not (2) so very, very bad.

-
- (1) In the opening chapter Dickens refers to Lizzie in ways which suggest a close connection with her environment. For example, she is wholly at ease in a boat:
The girl rowed, pulling a pair of sculls very easily. (Book I, ch.i).
- (2) Dickens, op.cit., book II, ch.xii.

By concentrating in Charley all dissatisfaction with Gaffer Hexam's influence, Dickens has simultaneously weakened the interest and credibility of Lizzie's character and struck a blow at the ideal of self-advancement. It is difficult to believe in the existence of anyone whose behaviour is as free of even trivial instances of selfishness as Lizzie's is: she is self-abnegating in her relationship with her father; and the unselfishness of her love for Wrayburn so impresses Bella Wilfer that she is moved to remorse for the selfish worldliness of her own motivation. Moreover, Lizzie is idealized through Dickens' treatment of the psychology of Bradley Headstone and Eugene Wrayburn, both of whom, contrasts though they are, find it difficult to come to terms with their passion for her. Both discover the truth which Headstone articulates to Lizzie:

"No man knows till the time comes, what depths (1) are within him".

Much of the force of Dickens' idealization comes from the way in which he presents the relationship between Lizzie and Wrayburn so as to arouse in the reader the expectation that Our Mutual Friend will be another story of the seduction of a working-class girl by a middle-class man. (2) Riah fears for Lizzie because he sees Wrayburn as the casual seducer; and Dickens implies that there is a discrepancy between the

(1) Ibid., book II, ch.xv.

(2) Before 1865, when Our Mutual Friend was finished, this theme had been dealt with by a number of writers now considered major authors: George Eliot in Silas Marner (1861) and Adam Bede (1859), Mrs. Gaskell in Ruth (1853) and Mary Barton, Dickens himself in David Copperfield (1849-50).

real Eugene Wrayburn and the image of him which Lizzie cherishes:

There was an appearance of openness, trustfulness, unsuspecting generosity, in his words and manner, (1) that won the poor girl over...

Dickens continues to play upon his readers' curiosity by emphasizing Lizzie's vulnerability to the influence of this man, whose carelessness and shallowness have been well established. Her influence for good is, therefore, presented as all the greater in that she is able to upset Wrayburn's complacency. The clinching comments at the end of the novel make it clear that Dickens wished to assert the importance of marrying for the partner's character rather than for social status and its outward manifestations. According to Lady Tippins the point at issue in Wrayburn's marriage to Lizzie is "whether a young man of very fair family, good appearance, and some talent, makes a fool or a wise man of himself in marrying a female waterman, turned factory girl." (2) Mortimer challenges this:

"I take the question to be, whether such a man as you describe, Lady Tippins, does right or wrong in marrying a brave woman (I say nothing of her beauty), who has saved his life, with a wonderful energy and address; whom he knows to be virtuous and possessed of remarkable qualities; whom he has long admired, and who is deeply attached to him." (3)

Perhaps this exchange helps to explain why Lizzie Hexam is a little unconvincing: Dickens has been too overtly illustrating a thesis and failing to reconcile the requirements of clear argument and probability.

(1) Our Mutual Friend, book II, ch.ii.

(2) Ibid., book IV, ch.xvii.

(3) Ibid.

(iv) Improvement through Education

Dickens adopts a defensive position in his treatment of Lizzie Hexam: it is necessary for her to perform an act of heroism in order to put beyond doubt her claim to marry Wrayburn⁽¹⁾; and she has to undergo a process of education before she is considered by her creator a suitable wife for a middle-class man.⁽²⁾ Gissing's treatment of the subject of Thyrza's education is complicated and confused. To prepare herself for the role of Egremont's wife Thyrza feels that she should further her intellectual education during her two-year separation from Egremont, and to this end she buys some learned books and struggles through them. Although Gissing suggests that, because her reading was undirected, it was not always profitable to her, he represents Egremont as being in no doubt that Thyrza should have some kind of education:

"Thyrza will need to be taught much, and will be (3)
eager to learn."

However, when Mrs. Ormonde suggests to Egremont that it would be unwise of him to marry Thyrza, she does so in terms which imply that Thyrza has acquired both a mental and a spiritual refinement which puts her beyond his reach and makes her self-sufficient:

-
- (1) This also allows Dickens to show Wrayburn shocked into humility and a sense of responsibility; his uncertainty is thus dispelled, and he is made morally worthy of Lizzie.
- (2) Joe in Great Expectations is better fitted for the role of Biddy's husband when she has taught him to write.
- (3) Thyrza, ch.xxxv.

"She can suffer, I think, even more than most women, but she has, too, far more strength than most women, a mind of a higher order, purer consolations. And she has art to aid her, a resource (1) you and I cannot judge of with assurance."

There is no suggestion that Thyrza should try to acquire knowledge through study in order to fit herself for the position which she first intends to occupy, that of Gilbert Grail's wife; yet Grail is a passionate reader, worthy of a wife who shares his interests. This is one manifestation of the anti-democratic spirit which pervades Thyrza, despite the generosity with which Gissing treats most of the working-class characters in the novel.

(v) Transcendence of Class Issues

Although I hope to show that Lawrence represents the relationship between Louisa Lindley and Alfred Durant in the context of issues which blot out the minutiae of class conventions and preoccupations, it would be misleading to underestimate their importance in the story. The symmetrical structure embodies a number of sharp class contrasts: Mr. and Mrs. Durant are balanced by Mr. and Mrs. Lindley; Alfred is contrasted with Mr. Massy; and Mary and Louisa are contrasted in the degree to which they are capable of shaking off the inhibiting influences of their middle-class upbringing. Louisa is made conscious of her different class background by the rituals of the miner's household. When she has to wash Alfred's back during his mother's illness,

(1) Ibid., ch.xxxvii.

she is at first repelled because in her middle-class home the predominant mode is private and individual:

Curious how it hurt her to take part in their fixed routine of life! Louisa felt the almost repulsive intimacy being forced upon her. It was all so common, so like herding. She lost (1) her own distinctness.

However, several pieces of evidence may be adduced in support of the contention that Lawrence is not presenting the relationship between Louisa and Alfred in narrow class terms. The language which he uses is not the language of class. What Alfred means to Louisa is expressed in a paragraph revealing her reactions to him when she was present at his father's death:

Her heart, her veins were possessed by the thought of Alfred Durant as he held his mother in his arms; then the break in his voice, as she remembered it again and again, was like a flame through her; and she wanted to see his face more distinctly in her mind, ruddy with the sun, and his golden-brown eyes, kind and careless, strained now with a natural fear, the fine nose tanned hard by the sun, the mouth that could not help smiling at her. And it went through her with pride to think of his figure, a straight, (2) fine jet of life.

The association of the sun with vitality, developed in the story called 'Sun' (3), is implicit in the frequent references

(1) Lawrence, 'Daughters of the Vicar', The Prussian Officer (London, 1914), section x. An early version of the story appeared in Time and Tide (24 March 1934), as 'Two Marriages'.

(2) *Ibid.*, section iii.

(3) Lawrence writes of Juliet in this story:

By some mysterious will inside her, deeper than her known consciousness and her known will, she was put into connection with the sun, and the stream flowed through her, round her womb. She herself, her conscious self, was secondary, a secondary person, almost an onlooker. The true Juliet lived in the dark flow of the sun within her deep body... ('Sun', section ii, New Coterie, Autumn, 1926. First unexpurgated edition, Paris, 1928. Quotation from the unexpurgated edition.)

to Alfred's suntanned appearance in the same context as other phrases suggesting sources of vitality: "like a flame through her", "a straight, fine jet of life." The significance of the flame image is clearer in Sons and Lovers (1913), when Paul talks to Miriam about the relationship between his mother and father:

"That's what one must have, I think," he continued - "the real, real flame of feeling through another person - once, only once, if it only lasts three months. See, my mother looks as if she'd had everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There's not a tiny bit of feeling of sterility about her."

"No," said Miriam.

"And with my father, at first, I'm sure she had the real thing. She knows; she has been there. You can feel it about her, and about him, and about hundreds of people you meet every day; and, once it has happened to you, you can go on (1) with anything and ripen."

Here and in 'Daughters of the Vicar' Lawrence is writing of something perceived in a person's physical being but not confined to it. It can be defined only in terms of relationship, of the capacity of one person to relate dynamically to another, arousing or responding to a sense of potential and a feeling of the glow of living on many levels. The contrast between Alfred Durant and Mr. Massy is expressed in language which evaluates the two men according to their capacity to enter into a warm and satisfying relationship. Whereas Durant is associated with life-giving sources, Massy is associated in Louisa's mind with death:

Mr. Massy prayed with a pure lucidity that they all might conform to the higher Will. He was like

(1) Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (London, 1913), ch.xii.

something that dominated the bowed heads, something dispassionate that governed them inexorably. Miss Louisa was afraid of him. And she was bound, during the course of the prayer, to have a little reverence for him. It was like a foretaste of inexorable, cold death, a taste of pure justice. (1)

Unlike Alfred he has no emotional vitality:

He had not normal powers of perception. They soon saw that he lacked the full range of human feelings, but had rather a strong, philosophical mind, from which he lived. (2)

It may be objected that the reader is always likely to be aware of the class origins of these two men, so that, in spite of the language Lawrence uses, he is implying that there is a strong connection between social class on the one hand and moral attitudes and qualities on the other. However, through his treatment of the character of Louisa, Lawrence shows that he does not rigidly equate the working classes with emotional and physical vitality and the middle class with a destructive consciousness and false values. Such a simplistic interpretation would also be disturbed by Lawrence's attribution to Mrs. Durant of aspirations to vicarious gentility: she is slightly disappointed in Alfred because she would have liked him to be a gentleman. Moreover, he avoids making the suggestion that there is a class-determined relativity in moral values, whereby a quality admirable or even merely acceptable in a working-class person would be

(1) 'Daughters of the Vicar', section iii.

(2) Ibid.

regarded as less so in a middle-class man or woman, who would be expected to have loftier aspirations and achievements. There is no suggestion that Louisa is letting herself down by marrying Alfred Durant; on the contrary, Mr. Massy is inadequate because he lacks many of Alfred's qualities. Conversely, Lawrence does not lapse into sentimentality in his treatment of this inter-class marriage. Although Alfred embodies most of the positive qualities in Lawrence's moral world, there are hints of weakness. After his mother's death, for instance, he spends more time drinking in the village inn, embarking on a course which could destroy some of his finer sensitivities.

Finally, it is pertinent to the argument to point out that this story is not primarily about class but about freedom and integrity. Its title suggests that the central contrast is between Louisa and Mary; and the essential difference between them is that Louisa, in her choice of marriage-partner, asserts her freedom from convention and retains her integrity, whereas Mary sacrifices herself to conventional pressures worthless though they are — and, in Louisa's opinion, loses her spiritual and moral wholeness:

In Louisa's eyes, Mary was degraded, married to Mr. Massy. She could not bear to think of her lofty, spiritual sister degraded in the body like this. Mary was wrong, wrong, wrong; she was not superior, she was flawed, incomplete. (1)

(1) Ibid., section vi.

UNSATISFACTORY INTER-CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

With the exception of Alton Locke the novels in which the presentation of inter-class relationships is less optimistic deal with marriage not courtship. However, not all are written in the same mode. The marriage between Ellen and Ernest in Butler's The Way of All Flesh (1903) is closer in conception to the relationship between Alton Locke and Lillian Winnstay than to the inter-class relationships in Gissing's Demos and Workers in the Dawn: Gissing is exploring in naturalistic terms the possibility of relationship, whereas Kingsley and Butler are using the relationship to make a point in a roman à thèse. I shall examine first the relationship in Alton Locke and The Way of All Flesh.

(i) Alton Locke and The Way of All Flesh

From Locke's ill-conceived passion for Lillian, the Dean's daughter, Kingsley draws two maxims, one moral and one political. The fragility of mortal beauty is illustrated by the destruction of Lillian's good looks in an attack of smallpox; and the folly of worshipping such beauty is made apparent. Although he makes Lillian unworthy of the devotion of a reasonable man, Kingsley does not discredit all women of her class: Eleanor, the mouthpiece of Christian Socialist teaching in the novel, is from the same social stratum. However, there is an obvious parallel between Locke's misplaced idolization of Lillian and his misguided

adherence to Chartism. The connection is implicit in Eleanor's tendentious comment to him:

"I should have known how enchanting, intoxicating, mere outward perfections must have been to one of your perceptions, shut out so long as you have been from the beautiful in art and nature." (1)

Locke himself comes to realize that, in adhering to Chartism, he is putting his faith in externals, as he did in his attitude to Lillian, because he is shut out from them. The two situations amount to Kingsley's comment on the tendency of the less privileged in society to put an inflated value on something unattainable, until educated to a proper understanding of personal and social values.

In his characterization of Ellen in The Way of All Flesh Butler appears to be drawing upon a working-class stereotype. She speaks ungrammatically, and Butler misspells certain words in her speech not because she would mispronounce them but merely to help place her socially:

"I know you was always very fond of tripe and onions..." (2)

"And how is your pore dear mamma, and your dear papa, Master Ernest?" (3)

With her surreptitious fondness for drink Ellen is in a

(1) Kingsley, Alton Locke (London, 1850), ch.xxxix.

(2) Samuel Butler, The Way of All Flesh (London, 1903), ch.lxxi.

(3) Ibid.

Dickens adopts the same technique of using unorthodox spellings in order to indicate social position. For example, Jo in Bleak House says "wos" for "was", although the unorthodox spelling does not indicate a change in pronunciation.

large category of working-class women in fiction.⁽¹⁾

However, she differs from most working-class wives who are addicted to drink in that she manages to retain a youthful freshness, with which she disarms Ernest:

...it would have taken a man of much greater experience than he possessed to suspect how completely she had fallen from her first estate. It never occurred to him that the poor condition of her wardrobe was due to her passion for ardent spirits, and that first and last she had served five or six times as much time in jail as he had. He ascribed the poverty of her attire to the attempts to keep herself respectable, which Ellen during supper had more than once alluded to. ⁽²⁾

Although Ernest's response to Ellen is presented as understandable, a later remark suggests that Butler wishes this unfortunate marriage to be seen as a result of the vulnerability which his upbringing had fostered:

If you were a young John Stuart Mill, perhaps it would have taken you some time, but suppose your nature was quixotic, impulsive, altruistic, guileless; suppose you were a hungry man starving for something to love and lean upon, for one whose burdens you might bear, and who might help you to bear yours...how long under these circumstances do you think you would reflect before you would decide on embracing what chance had thrown in your way? ⁽³⁾

Butler dismisses the notion that the social disparity between Ellen and Ernest might be a source of unhappiness in their marriage; but he does so in a brisk, dogmatic manner which suggests that he is not interested in exploring the relationship in depth:

(1) The category includes Sairey Gamp, Carrie Mitchell, Mrs. Kemp in Liza of Lambeth and, in the twentieth century, Walter Greenwood's group of comic housewives in Love on the Dole.

(2) Butler, op.cit., ch.1xxi.

(3) Ibid.

Ellen and he got on capitally, all the better, perhaps, because the disparity between them was so great, that neither did Ellen want to be elevated, nor did Ernest want to elevate her. He was very fond of her, and very kind to her; they had interests which they could serve in common; they had antecedents with a good part of which each was familiar; they had each of them excellent tempers, and this was enough. (1)

(ii) Naturalistic Presentation of Unsatisfactory Relationships

In this section of the chapter I shall examine the naturalistic treatment of inter-class marriages in two novels by Gissing, Workers in the Dawn and Demos (1886), and in Lawrence's Sons and Lovers. The main questions which I shall seek to answer are:

- (i) What is the precise social placing of the people involved?
- (ii) In what respects are the marriages unsatisfactory?
- (iii) How significant is class in explaining the unsatisfactory outcome?

The extent of the social gap between Arthur Golding and Carrie Mitchell is difficult to determine exactly since Arthur, though an aspiring artist, was brought up in White-chapel by a working man.⁽²⁾ Gissing contrasts Carrie with the middle-class philanthropist Helen Norman in their relationships with Golding, and it is difficult to avoid making inferences about class attitudes and relations from

(1) Ibid., ch.1xxiii.

(2) Samuel Tollady is a particularly thoughtful and politically aware working man.

the marriage between him and Carrie. The class implications of the central relationships in Workers in the Dawn are suggested not only by the fact that Carrie and Helen are from different social classes but also by the connection between Carrie and her environment postulated by Gissing. She was "emphatically a child of the town, dreaming of nothing but its gross delights, seeing in everything pure and lovely but a sapless image of some town-made joy."⁽¹⁾ In her enjoyment of "gross delights" and in her taste for the meretricious, Carrie is like the Pettindunds, whom Gissing represents as repellent, morally debased denizens of the slums. She is sexually attractive, but her attractiveness is presented in negative terms by Gissing. It gives her no dignity, no endearing qualities; and it appeals to the latent sensuality in Golding:

Love! Love! Could he use the same word to express the excitement of the senses which Carrie Mitchell's prettiness had once had power to cause, and that holy passion which, ignited by the hand of Helen Norman, burned

(1) Gissing, Workers in the Dawn (London, 1880), book III, ch.xiv.

like a pure unquenchable flame upon the (1)
altar of his heart?

A sense of hopelessness also emerges in Gissing's treatment of Richard Mutimer, who is morally trapped by the limitations of the social type he represents. Gissing attributes behaviour to class origins, and the failure of the marriage with Adela Waltham not to incompatibility of background so much as to what he sees of the weaknesses characteristic of the educated working man. Mutimer's wish to marry Adela is seen as an extension of his social ambitions, which have a materialistic cast. His desire to possess Adela as a wife is equated with his newly-acquired taste for delicate foods. Although he is unengaged emotionally, Mutimer finds it necessary to rationalize his wish to marry Adela and does so by referring to theories about class relationships which he has uncritically absorbed:

(1) Ibid., book III, ch.xi.

The value of the contrast between Carrie Mitchell and Helen Norman as a basis for generalization about class is slight because of the extremes which it invokes. Intellectually they are at opposite poles: Helen reads Schopenhauer; Carrie is illiterate and fails to respond to Golding's attempts to educate her. They are also morally at opposite extremes which correspond to the dichotomy of flesh and spirit. Although the structure of *Demos* has a similar pattern in that Adela and Mutimer are ranged with potential marriage-partners of their own social classes, the contrasts are toned down. Mutimer is an educated working man and morally upright until he succumbs to some of the temptations of newly-acquired power and wealth; and Hubert Eldon, his middle-class counterpart, has the morality of his behaviour called in question when he returns from Paris after being injured in a duel. By the time Gissing wrote *Demos* in 1886 he may have been able to transform his experiences into material for his novels with more objectivity than he could muster in 1880: when he was writing *Workers in the Dawn* he was struggling to study while trying to support the prostitute whom he had married. His subsequent disillusionment and self-disgust seem to have been poured into *Workers in the Dawn*.

Nay, he told himself that the genuineness and value of his life's work would be increased by a marriage with Adela Waltham; he and she would represent the union of classes - of the wage-earning with the bourgeois, between which two lay the real (1) gist of the combat.

Like Carrie, Mutimer is coarse not merely in manner but also emotionally and intellectually. Gissing sees coarseness as a working-class characteristic which cannot be eliminated by the attainment of wealth and status. Coarseness verging on brutality is most clearly illustrated by Mutimer's behaviour to Adela after their marriage; and Adela feels, as she looks at his face, that he belongs to a different order of beings:

She could not avert her gaze; it seemed to her that she was really scrutinising his face for the first time, and it was as that of a stranger. Not one detail had the stamp of familiarity: the whole repelled her...

It was the face of a man by birth and breeding altogether beneath her.

...Their life of union was a mockery; their married intimacy was an unnatural horror. He was not of her class, not of her world; only by violent wrenching of the laws of nature had they come together. She had spent years in trying to convince herself that there were no such distinctions, that only an unworthy prejudice parted class from class. One moment of true insight was worth more than all her theorising on abstract principles. To be her equal this man must be born again, of (2) other parents, in other conditions of life.

The concept of equality which Gissing presents through Adela's reflections is the reverse of the notion of moral equality which has been examined in this chapter. Although there is

(1) Gissing, Demos (London, 1886), ch.x.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxvi.

slight qualification of a deterministic approach⁽¹⁾, it counts for little in the overall impression created by the book. Even after Mutimer develops to the point at which he respects Adela's "strength and purity", he seems to belong to an earlier stage in the evolutionary process. This stage is determined by his class circumstances; yet Gissing does not temper his adverse judgement of Mutimer to match it with his explanation of his behaviour.

Although the contrast and conflict between Walter and Gertrude Morel has some connection with their different backgrounds, Lawrence is neither so deterministic nor so cynical in his approach to an inter-class marriage as Gissing in Demos and Workers in the Dawn. The social gap between Gertrude and Morel is slightly narrower than that between Durant and Louisa in 'Daughters of the Vicar'. The difference in family background is not simply a matter of occupation; it has more to do with family tradition. Mr. Coppard, as an engineer, lived on the fringe of the middle class; but his was "a good old burgher family, famous independents, who had fought with Colonel Hutchinson, and who remained stout Congregationalists."⁽²⁾ Walter Morel

(1) His primitive ideas on woman had undergone a change since his marriage. Previously he had considered a wife in the light of property; intellectual or moral independence he could not attribute to her. But he had learnt that Adela was by no means his chattel...A dim inkling of what was meant by woman's strength and purity had crept into his mind; he knew - in his heart he knew - that he was unworthy to touch her garment. (Ibid., ch.xx).

(2) Sons and Lovers, ch.i.

is of bohemian stock:

His grandfather was a French refugee who had married an English barmaid - if it had been a marriage. (1)

The marriage between Gertrude Coppard and Walter Morel is subjected to strains by Morel's weak-willed irresponsibility and superficiality:

Sometimes, when she herself wearied of love-talk, she tried to open her heart seriously to him. She saw him listen deferentially, but without understanding. This killed her efforts at a finer intimacy, and she had flashes of fear. (2)

Although Lawrence suggests that Gertrude is intolerant, he does so in such a way as to absolve her of serious responsibility for the relative failure of the marriage-relationship:

The pity was, she was too much his opposite. She could not be content with the little he might be; she would have him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him. She injured and hurt and scarred herself, but she lost none of her worth. (3)

Morel's superficiality could be seen as the shallowness of an uneducated man, and his irresponsible drinking habits as the behaviour of a typical miner:

He drank rather heavily, though not more than many miners... (4)

There seems to be evidence, therefore, that Lawrence presents Morel as an exemplification of his scepticism about the capacity of a working man to enter into a satisfying love-relationship with someone of superior social standing. However, within Sons and Lovers there are qualifications

(1) Ibid., ch.i.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

which make this an inadequate interpretation. As we have already seen, Morel kindles a "real flame of feeling" in Gertrude in the first few months of their marriage and the effect of this has not faded with the diminution of the love between them. Moreover, Lawrence suggests that Morel had the potential for greater sensitivity when he says, of his alienation of the children:

Conversation was impossible between the father and any other member of the family. He was an outsider. (1)
He had denied the God in him.

SEDUCTION

When Lydia Trent hears gossip about her sister's furtive meetings with Walter Egremont, she immediately fears for Thyrsa's honour:

There was one hypothesis which Lydia quite left aside. She did not ask herself whether Egremont might not truly and honestly love her sister. It was natural enough that she should not think of it. Every tradition weighed in favour of rascality on the young man's part, and Lydia's education did not suffice to raise her above the common point of view in such a matter. A gentleman did not fall in love with a work-girl, not in (2)
the honest sense.

Her relief is correspondingly great when she discovers that Egremont has not seriously compromised Thyrsa:

Still he was innocent of the guilt she had suspected. Thyrsa had not come to the dreaded harm. Though heart-broken, she was saved. (3)
Lydia felt almost joyous for an instant.

(1) Ibid., ch.iv.

(2) Thyrsa, ch.xxiii.

(3) Ibid.

The assumption that a middle- or upper-class man who courts a working-class girl is a potential seducer Gissing attributes here to working-class prejudice; but he recognises that the assumption is understandable and its hold is strong.

Several nineteenth-century novelists substantiate what Gissing represents as Lydia's prejudice by using in their novels a situation in which a working-class girl is seduced, or in danger of being seduced, by a man who is her social superior. Novelists who make more than a passing allusion to such a situation include Mrs. Gaskell in Mary Barton and Ruth (1853), Walter Besant in Children of Gibeon (1886) and John Law in A City Girl (1887).⁽¹⁾ I shall first refer briefly to evidence of contemporary attitudes to the victims of seduction, and I shall then try to answer the following questions from the four novels specified:

- (i) What type of debate does the writer undertake in his or her treatment of the theme of seduction? (How far is the situation presented as a moral issue, how far in terms of class relationships?).
- (ii) What attitudes are expressed to the seducer (or potential seducer) and the seduced?

The respectable working man's response to seduction and its victims is precisely charted in Dickens' David Copperfield (1849-50). Although Mr. Peggotty forgives

(1) John Law is the pseudonym of Margaret Harkness.

little Em'ly for running away with Steerforth, he considers that her only hope of rehabilitating herself lies outside English society; and Ham does not contemplate marrying her after she has been abandoned by Steerforth.⁽¹⁾ He can only hope "fur to see her without blame, wheer the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest".⁽²⁾ The ending of A City Girl might suggest that attitudes, particularly in the working-class community, had softened in the late 1880s: Nelly, seduced by a middle-class married man, is accepted by George, her working-class suitor, as his wife. However, Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891) provides evidence that attitudes changed more slowly than John Law's book might lead the reader to believe. Although Hardy sees as misguided a response such as Angel Clare's to Tess's seduction, the aggressiveness of his treatment of the subject and his portrayal of Tess's own sense of guilt indicates that he is contending against deeply entrenched prejudices. All four novels to be examined, therefore, were written in a social context in which a seduced girl might expect shame and ostracism, even if liberal-humanitarian attitudes were sympathetic to her plight.

Mrs. Gaskell's Ruth is primarily a novel of moral debate: although social attitudes to seduction and illegitimacy come under scrutiny, the issues are not presented in

-
- (1) There is no evidence that Dickens is representing Ham as callous and absurd. For a more detailed discussion of this and similar situations see A.H. Gomme, Dickens (1971), pp. 102-105. See also Mrs. Gaskell's Lizzie Leigh?
- (2) Dickens, David Copperfield (London, 1849-50), ch.11.

class terms. A comment on Mr. Benson's reaction to his meeting with Ruth is applicable to the writer's preoccupations in the book as a whole: after learning of Ruth's plight, he is led to think radically about "whole labyrinths of social ethics."⁽¹⁾ That Ruth Hilton is a working girl helps to explain why she is the victim of seduction and makes the situation plausible, but had Mrs. Gaskell wished to treat the subject as a class issue she could have made Mr. Bellingham a more callous and calculating person. He seems to have some affection for Ruth, although her main attraction for him is her beauty; and Mrs. Gaskell allows him some reason for feeling weary of Ruth and embarrassed by her presence with him in Wales when she shows Ruth's inadequacy in making conversation and participating in his enjoyments. It is in dealing with this situation that Mrs. Gaskell makes the difference in class seem most significant, but she merely shows us the effects of cultural differences: she does not write of the situation in terms of the exploitation of one class by another.

The moral debate is concentrated upon attitudes to Ruth. Mrs. Gaskell does not argue that Ruth has not sinned — her desire to expiate the wrong is not presented as far-fetched — but the mitigating circumstances are numerous and, together, form a plea for charity to Ruth. Ruth's naïveté in her relations with Mr. Bellingham is attributable partly

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, Ruth (London, 1853), ch.xi.

to her having no mother to guide her:

She was too young when her mother died to have received any cautions or words of advice respecting (1) the subject of a woman's life...

Mrs. Mason's misguided concern for propriety causes Ruth to seek help from any source, even Mr. Bellingham, who gives a good impression of himself to Ruth with his sympathetic, brotherly manner; and Ruth is understandably disarmed by his action in rescuing a boy from drowning. Although Mrs. Gaskell bases her plea for forgiveness of Ruth on the example of Christ's mercifulness to sinners, she also builds up an impression of Ruth's vulnerability which makes charity the only humanitarian response.

Mrs. Gaskell makes the class issue more significant in her treatment of the relationship between Mary Barton and Harry Carson, in which Mary is in danger of being seduced. According to Wanda Neff in Victorian Working Women, vanity and coquettishness were characteristic weaknesses of girls who became seamstresses, many of them attracted to the job because it was less grimy than factory work. In this respect Mary Barton is a typical seamstress. Carson is not merely a middle-class man: he is also a millowner's son. Mrs. Gaskell therefore puts the relationship between Mary and Carson into the pattern of social relations basic to the novel as a whole, that of employer and employee. She leaves us in no doubt that Harry Carson does not intend to marry Mary:

(1) Ibid., ch.iii.

She had wondered more than once if she must not have another interview with Mr. Carson; and had then determined, while she expressed her resolution that it would be the final one, to tell him how sorry she was if she had thoughtlessly given him false hopes. For be it remembered, she had the innocence, or the ignorance, to believe his intentions honourable; and he, feeling that at any time he must have her, only that he would obtain her as cheaply as he could, had never (1) undeceived her...

Harry's remarks to Mary make him into a stereotyped villain and suggest that Mrs. Gaskell was appealing to a stock response in her readers⁽²⁾:

"Nay, nay! you little witch! Now I have caught you, I shall keep you prisoner. Tell me now what has made you run away so fast these few days — tell me, you sweet little coquette!"⁽³⁾

Moreover, the snobbery behind Harry Carson's dismissal of serious consideration of Mary as a future wife is particularly indefensible because as Jane Wilson tells Mary, Harry's mother, before her marriage to Carson, would have been pleased to marry George Wilson:

"There were nought about me for him to choose me. I were just well enough afore that accident, but at after I were downright plain. And there was Bessy Witter as would ha' given her eyes for him; she as is Mrs. Carson now, for she were a handsome lass, although I never could see her beauty then; and Carson warn't so much above her, (4) as they're both above us all now."

Walter Besant also uses the potential seduction theme in the context of the working lives of seamstresses, but his concern is the conditions in which they live and work, not

(1) Mary Barton, ch.xi.

(2) The tone is so false that it suggests uncertainty in representing this side of Carson's character.

(3) Ibid., ch.xi.

(4) Ibid., ch.x.

the employer-employee relationship. Lizzie's susceptibility to the persuasions of the artist Jack Conyers to give up her job as a seamstress and become a model for him is largely attributable to the hardships of her lot. Besant's book is crammed with details and explicit comments which make Lizzie's day-dreams understandable. However, he is more condescending than Mrs. Gaskell in referring to the naïvete of the working-class girl, which makes her particularly vulnerable. Besant claims that most girls of Lizzie's class "are absolutely unable to detach even one of the fine and confused variety of feelings which agitate their minds when a wooer comes to them."⁽¹⁾

In A City Girl the seduction theme (in this case in an adulterous relationship) is used by John Law as a means of commenting on the gulf between the East and West Ends, and of exposing flaws in the middle-class ideal of domestic married happiness. The author explains Nelly's desire to be a lady by filling in details of the discomforts and hardships of the lives of East Enders generally and of Nelly in particular: Law creates in Nelly's family an unattractive household with a complaining, peevish mother and a loafer of a brother. Although Nelly's sweetheart George is a responsible, considerate man, his very strengths count against him in the circumstances in which he lives and works. Because he has a poorly-paid job, he does not feel that he

(1) Walter Besant, Children of Gibeon (London, 1886), ch.xxvi.

is in a position to marry Nelly; and the heavy demands of his work limit his opportunities of taking her out:

...he was content to "keep company" with her, to take her out for walks, to go with her occasionally — very occasionally, for he had to light the lamps at night — to a theatre, and gossip with her on her balcony when his work lay in that (1)
direction.

It is not therefore surprising that Nelly enjoys being taken to the theatre by Mr. Grant, whose work allows him more free time than George's does. However, her sense of being a lady is a delusion, the bitter realization of which she experiences most strongly when she goes to West Kensington and catches a glimpse of Mr. Grant in his home:

She realized that Whitechapel may talk to Kensington, and Kensington may shake hands with Whitechapel, but between them there is a great gulf fixed, the thought of which made her head (2)
ache and her heart sink.

On his part Mr. Grant, though happy in his domestic life, responds to its dullness by periodically breaking away from it. He has qualms of conscience, but he responds in a superficial way, indicative of his shallowness, to the discovery that Nelly has a child by him:

Of course he was dreadfully sorry. He tried to walk it off, to row it off, to drown it in champagne and whisky. That night tears came into his eyes when he looked at his West End baby. He was very proud of his tears — they were senti- (3)
mental as those of a German lover.

(1) John Law, A City Girl (London, 1887), ch.ii.

(2) Ibid., ch.vi.

(3) Ibid., ch.xii.

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from such disparate material. As I have tried to show, even the theme of seduction is used to make a variety of points, according to context. Gissing's novels provide some of the most interesting explorations of the theme of inter-class personal relationships, but he has no consistent attitudes: Workers in the Dawn reflects Gissing's disillusionment and Demos his cynicism, but The Unclassed is bold and idealistic. It is difficult to prove that any writer who presented inter-class marriage- and love-relationships as feasible deliberately restricted presentation and idealized characters in order to try to make the situation carry conviction; but there may be some significance in the fact that several of the working-class characters involved in such relationships are exceptional in their class or unconvincingly idealized figures.

CHAPTER V

WORKING-CLASS PROSTITUTES⁽¹⁾

The term "prostitution" was variously defined by nineteenth-century observers, who included Henry Mayhew and Bracebridge Hemyng in the volume of London Labour and the London Poor (1861-62) entitled Those That Will Not Work, William Acton in Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities (1857), and in the Final Volume of Booth's Life and Labour of the People in London.⁽²⁾ However, there was agreement among these observers that the term was applicable to a

-
- (1) No reliable figures are available of the number of prostitutes operating at any given time. According to the Metropolitan Police estimate for 1857 there were 8,600 in London, but many contemporary estimates put the number much higher.
- (2) Mayhew and Hemyng define prostitution as "the using of her charms by a woman for immoral purposes. This, of course, may be done either from mercenary or voluptuous motives..." (Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, London, 1861, Extra Volume, p. 35). Acton defines it as "the fact of hiring, whether openly or secretly, whether by an individual or a plurality in succession." (William Acton, Prostitution, Considered in Its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects, in London and Other Large Cities, London, 1857). This and all subsequent quotations are from the Fitzroy edition (Macgibbon and Kee, 1968), which is abridged from the Second, enlarged edition of 1870). Charles Booth writes: It needs to be borne in mind that the immorality involved is entirely different, in character and even in origin, from ordinary loose conduct between the sexes. Its sole aim is the satisfaction of male sexual passion, without the responsibilities of marriage or anything that can be called a social relationship. The female share of the matter is strictly professional. (Booth, Life and Labour of the People in London, 3rd ed., London, 1902-3, Final Volume, pp. 121-22). See also Gissing, The Unclassed (London, 1884), ch.iii.

variety of types of character and ways of life. The types included the demi-mondaine, who usually had her own apartments and frequented fashionable haunts; the woman who lived in a brothel with other prostitutes, under the supervision of a "house mistress"; the girl who operated alone, often using houses of accommodation; and the street-walker who solicited in the streets and slept in doorways or in the poorest lodging-houses. Some women engaged in prostitution all the time; others did so occasionally, often under the pressure of financial need.⁽¹⁾ The prostitute was not necessarily a working-class woman. However, in their account of prostitution in London Labour and the London Poor, Mayhew and Hemyng point out that some of the class of prostitute whom they describe as "prima donnas", with a wealthy and fashionable clientèle, were artisans' daughters; and they imply that many prostitutes came from humbler backgrounds.

In the first half of this chapter I shall examine fictional treatments of the lives and characters of prostitutes, in the light of comments by contemporary observers where possible and appropriate.⁽²⁾ In the second section

(1) Acton, Mayhew and Hemyng, and Booth classify the prostitutes themselves, according to professional character and the places in which they live and work. See Acton, op.cit., pp. 34-65, Mayhew, op.cit., pp. 213-260, and Booth, op.cit., pp. 122-126).

(2) Acton's book will be most often used as a starting-point: the introduction to the Fitzroy edition claims that in many respects it is superior to any other nineteenth-century account of prostitution in this country.

I shall attempt to analyse the details of the first part by looking at the balance between moral conventions and a sense of social responsibility in fictional presentations of prostitution.

PROSTITUTES: CHARACTERS AND WAYS OF LIFE

Working girls who turn to prostitution because of inadequate wages include Sally in The Unclassed, Lizzie in Alton Locke and Tilly in Adcock's story 'Tilly's Sister' (East End Idylls). However, there are those who, whatever their earlier pattern of existence, have become part of the group of regular prostitutes. Those in the most wretched category, of destitute street-walkers, include Penelope, in Adcock's story 'The Soul of Penelope Sanders' (East End Idylls) and Esther in Mary Barton who sleeps in entries or on doorsteps, or in the type of lodging-house in which Jem Wilson seeks her:

He and his companion, a kind-hearted policeman, were admitted, suspiciously enough, by the landlady, who ushered them into a large garret where twenty or thirty people of all ages and both sexes lay and dozed away the day, choosing the evening and night for their trades of beggary, (1) thieving, or prostitution.

Others who live in a degraded environment are Nancy in Oliver Twist, who comes from the Ratcliff Highway area, notorious for the multiplicity of its "disorderly houses", and Pigeony Poll, who lives in the demoralized area which Morrison calls the Jago. Morrison communicates a sense

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, Mary Barton (London, 1848), ch.xxxviii.

of the debased nature of life in the Jago by showing how widely-accepted moral standards were turned upside down.

Pigeony Poll is an outcast, but not because she is a prostitute: she is "despised for that she neither fought nor kept a cosh-carrier, like a respectable married woman".⁽¹⁾

The practice of "cosh-carrying", a "major industry" in the Jago, fits into Booth's description of what he considers to be the lowest form of prostitution:

...the bully protector or "ponce" becomes a common factor, and takes us on to the lowest grade of all, when robbery is the object in view⁽²⁾ and drunken men the prey.

Carrie in Workers in the Dawn and Dorrie in Tirebuck's novel of that name (1891) live for a while in the company of other prostitutes, in brothel and lodging-house. Carrie, whom Gissing describes as "one of the aristocracy of the demi-monde"⁽³⁾, lives in a brothel kept by Polly Hemp, with the old man Jo acting as "chucker out". She has little independence: she is a "dress lodger", receiving clothes, board and lodging from the owner of the house in return for which the proprietor extorts from her as much of her earnings as she can get. When Carrie is ill and unable to earn her living, she has her clothes taken from her and becomes virtually a prisoner. Dorrie is tracked down in a lodging-house which she shares with other prostitutes, who are presented as coarse

(1) Morrison, A Child of the Jago (London, 1896), ch.v.

(2) Booth, op.cit., p. 125.

(3) Gissing, Workers in the Dawn (London, 1880), book III, ch.xiv.

and unregenerate:

...the creature on the sofa turned her giggles into still more galling derision as Brant stood and looked appealingly and helplessly on, forced to hear brazenly-blurting blasphemous words which, even for pity's sake, even to show the pathetic depravity into which a woman's thoughts and tongue may fall cannot be repeated... (1)

Acton questioned the accuracy of the conventional image of the prostitute as "the dirty, intoxicated slattern, in tawdry finery and an inch thick in paint". (2) However, the conventional image is well represented in fiction. Mrs. Gaskell refers to Esther's "glaring paint" and "faded finery". (3) When Nancy and Bet first appear, Oliver's naïve description is unlikely to prevent the reader from recognizing the signs of their way of life:

They wore a good deal of hair, not very neatly turned up behind, and were rather untidy about the shoes and stockings. They were not exactly pretty, perhaps; but they had a great deal of colour in their faces, and looked quite stout (4) and hearty.

Although Acton attacks the popular notion of prostitutes as gin-sodden wretches, a propensity for drink among them is another common feature of their fictional treatment. Carrie, Nancy, the prostitute in the story 'A Spectre of a Sin', Pigeony Poll and Esther all have this tendency. Often it is seen as the resort of a prostitute unable to

(1) W.E. Tirebuck, Dorrie (London, 1891), ch.xlvii.

(2) Acton, op.cit., p. 60.

(3) Mrs. Gaskell, op.cit., ch.x.

(4) Dickens, Oliver Twist (London, 1837-39), ch.ix.

to come to terms with her sense of shame. Esther claims this motive:

"If we did not drink, we could not stand the memory of what we have been, and the thought of what we are, for a day". (1)

The prostitute in 'The Spectre of a Sin' (East End Idylls) says "my life's 'ell enough for any poor devil"; Carrie experiences moods of bitter penitence; and Nancy is awed and humbled in Rose Maylie's presence:

...she felt burdened with the sense of her own deep shame, and shrunk as though she could scarcely bear the presence of her with whom she had sought this interview. (2)

Esther is so sensitive to her disgrace that she refuses to let Mary kiss her. Ida Starr insists that she and Waymark observe the decorum of mere friendship in their relations; and, after revealing her history to Waymark, she embarks upon a process of purification, symbolized by her swim. Gissing makes explicit her intention to cleanse herself spiritually when he comments on a moment of flagging zeal:

With scarcely an hour of depression she had worked on through those months of solitude, supported by the sense that every day brought an accession of the strength of purity, that the dark time was left one more stage behind, and that trust in herself was growing assured. (3)

The prostitute's sense of shame is distinct from the sense of loss sometimes attributed to her. The saddest loss is seen as the joy of family life, particularly motherhood.

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, op.cit., ch.xiv.

(2) Dickens, op.cit., ch.xl.

(3) The Unclassed, ch.xxiii.

The prostitute among the tram-passengers in Morrison's story 'To Bow Bridge' (Tales of Mean Streets) is quick to make friends with a child sitting opposite her. There is a touch of obsessiveness about her manner who suggests frustration:

...one of the little ones, standing before her mother, was pushed almost to falling; and the harlot, seeing her chance, snatched the child (1) upon her knee.

Several prostitutes in fiction show a pathetic concern for other people's children:- Nancy for Oliver, Pigeony Poll for Looney, the prostitute in 'A Spectre of a Sin' for a child who has fallen under a 'bus.

The hardened prostitute such as Polly Hemp, with little capacity for affection and disinterestedness in relationships, is a rare character among those individualized. Even Carrie shows genuine love for Golding:

There was no feigning in this outbreak of passion, it was a genuine gleam of womanly nature making itself visible amid the foul gloom of a desecrated humanity. When she said that she had always loved him, she spoke the simple truth, strange and (2) incredible as it may seem.

Most of the prostitutes given prominence in nineteenth-century fiction turned to prostitution initially because

(1) Morrison, 'To Bow Bridge' Tales of Mean Streets (London, 1894)

(2) Workers in the Dawn, book III, ch.xiv. Gissing claims that Carrie is incapable of entering sensitively into a close relationship because she is lacking in moral awareness and is untrustworthy. In The Unclassed Waymark sees deceitfulness as characteristic of prostitutes:

He was well acquainted with the characteristics of girls of this class; he knew how all but impossible it is for them to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. (Ch.xvii).

of the pressures of poverty, or because they had become outcasts after being abandoned by seducers, not because of a predilection for the way of life. Gissing says of Lotty Starr:

She was by no means a vicious girl, she had no love of riot for its own sake; she would greatly have preferred a decent mode of life, had it (1) seemed practicable.

In some cases the prostitute has been involved in a relationship with one person over a period of time, which implies a willingness to enter into close relationship permanently: Esther and Carrie lived with their seducers. However, Carrie's sensibility, which Gissing sees as vulgar, fosters in her a taste for the spurious glamour of the demi-monde, which is stronger than love for or gratitude to Golding. Her taste epitomizes a working-class culture in which materialism, vulgarity and insensitivity flourish. Dorrie shows the weakness of sensuality, but she is not presented as an exemplification of a class culture; and she is treated sympathetically by Tirebuck. She has gaiety and warmth but finds no satisfactory outlet in her home, which she shares with her sister Katharine and a blind lodger, Nathan Brant. Katharine is a hard-working evangelical Christian, kind to her sister, but disapproving of levity, and ascetic. Brant, more willing to meet Dorrie's gaiety with his own, decides to become a preacher, a severe blow to Dorrie, who is infatuated with him. Dorrie's latent sexuality is frequently aroused, but always in situations barren of opportunities for the

(1) Ibid., ch.iii.

channelling of her sexual instincts in a satisfying relationship: she is kissed by a cab-boy; she is touched in a lascivious way by a theatre manager; and she is the object of Regie's (sic) irresponsible advances. Her dissatisfaction with home leads her into vulnerable situations. When she is captured by the Bengalese man and imprisoned in his "Infants' School", she is attacked by his woman accomplice, and she would willingly have returned to her sister and Nathan had she had the opportunity:

Bruised and cowed, Dorrie that night could have gone back to Katharine and Nathan with a clearer notion "of being good" and with a stronger will to continue so than she had ever had before. The overwhelming severity of the chastisement had shocked and frightened her into penitent humility. A love, of equal intensity, would have pleasantly wooed her into a similar state, and there was the germ for this radical change in Dorrie in her deep, silent, and waiting passion for Nathan. His nature, thoroughly roused to its highest and deepest affection, could have made her as humble and penitent as she was then; his reciprocated love could have saved her from her blind wandering experiences and these cruel (1) blows.

In a startling analogy Acton attacked what he thought were widely-held misconceptions about the effects of the prostitute's way of life:

If we compare the prostitute at thirty-five with her sister, who perhaps is the married mother of a family, or has been a toiling slave for years in the over-heated laboratories of fashion, we shall seldom find that the constitutional ravages often thought to be the necessary consequences of prostitution exceed those attributable to the cares of a family and the heart-wearing struggles of virtuous labour. (2)

(1) Tirebuck, op.cit., ch.xxviii.

(2) Acton, op.cit., p. 72.

He also challenged the popular contemporary assumptions that there was no possibility of moral or physical improvement in the condition of the prostitute, that she never escaped from her way of life, and that her decline was short and rapid. He claimed that many prostitutes married and others established respectable businesses; and that few fall victims to suicide, intemperance or other "super-vening illnesses"⁽¹⁾, such as insanity. Relatively few fictional prostitutes provide evidence in support of Acton's moderation. Pigeony Poll, Ida Starr and Sally do find escape routes — Pigeony Polly through her marriage to Kiddo Cook, Ida through her work at a laundry and, later, in her rôle as landlord in Litany Lane and Elm Court, and Sally by means of a job and marriage to O'Gree. Sally and Ida are not presented as typical town prostitutes: Sally retains a quality of freshness and innocence which makes her prostitution seem insignificant; and Ida is a person of rare sensitivity and intelligence, and is described by Waymark as "an original sort of girl".⁽²⁾ The escape of Pigeony Poll has more general significance in that she is conceived as the conventional prostitute, whose way of life has ravaged her: she is "coarse and pitted, and red about the eyes".⁽³⁾ The marriage of the two Jagos, Pigeony Poll and Kiddo Cook, is one of the few signs in A Child of the Jago that Morrison thought that it was possible for anyone to overcome the demoralizing influence of the environment. In

(1) Ibid., p. 73.

(2) The Unclassed, ch.xi.

(3) Morrison, A Child of the Jago (London, 1896), ch.v.

other books examined in this chapter the popular conception of the prostitute's fate is strongly represented. In most cases premature death is attributed to the ravages of the prostitute's way of life. Lotty Starr, Ida's mother, dies before she is thirty, of pneumonia; Esther dies a physical wreck, after becoming addicted to drink; Carrie dies from "a malady which was the consequence of her dissipated life" (1); and Gissing refers to the harmful effects of the prostitute's life in a remark about Polly Hemp:

This woman could never have been other than evil minded, but long years spent on the streets, and in all those nameless vicissitudes which, as a rule, render the prostitute's life mercifully brief, had reduced her to something far more akin (2) to beast than man.

Although Nancy does not die as a result of the day-to-day hazards of her existence, her premature death at Bill Sikes' hands seems, in the moral context of the novel, like a judgment on her. Dorrie's death in her mother's arms, also reads like the application of the moral and literary convention of poetic justice. Tirebuck comments of Nathan's failure to understand Dorrie's attitude to herself:

He could not see Dorrie's own position — Dorrie's inner history — from Dorrie's own point of view; he simply thought of rescue, reclamation; he did not read the decree of her own polluted physique, the fiat of her own relentless conscience which declared that she was not what she once was, that she never could be, that she was shattered, hopeless, irreparably in material and spiritual ruin... (3)

Self-respect has been irretrievably lost, and there is no expiation.

(1) Workers in the Dawn, book III, ch.xvi.

(2) *Ibid.*, book III, ch.viii.

(3) Tirebuck, *op.cit.*, ch.xlviii.

MORAL CONVENTIONS

Some aspects of the fictional presentation of the lives and characters of prostitutes create the impression that writers were moulding their material to certain moral conventions. The features which contribute most forcefully to this impression are:- the writers' preoccupation with some of the most wretched and tawdry aspects of prostitution; the miserable fates and sometimes gratuitously premature deaths meted out to them by their creators; and the attribution to the prostitute of a searing sense of shame and loss. Acton's comments, as we have seen, attacked some of these conceptions on the ground that they were unfair generalizations. Hemyng suggested that the moralist distorted the truth, and he tried to counter the "vulgar error" and "popular delusion" that the life of the prostitute is as revolting to herself, as it appears to the moralist sternly lamenting over the condition of the fallen".⁽¹⁾ However, there is a hint of prejudice in his evidence:

To be unchaste amongst the lower classes is not always a subject of reproach. ⁽²⁾

This type of class attitude is developed in a review of Acton's book in the Sanitary Review and Journal of Public Health III (1857-58):

It can hardly excite surprise that a sort of practical communism should prevail among the lower orders. The value of chastity is not

(1) Mayhew, op.cit., p. 212.

(2) Ibid., p. 221.

appreciated by them as it should be...It would appear that we are "drifting" into a sea of socialism. (1)

Nevertheless, the use of linguistic conventions in writing about prostitution suggests that the authors are appealing to moral assumptions among their readers. Euphemism is used, both of the business of prostitution and of the depravity of the prostitute's social environment. Jem Wilson describes Esther as "one of them miserable creatures that walk the streets"⁽²⁾; and Tirebuck avoids quoting the blasphemies of Dorrie's fellow-lodgers, referring merely to "words which cannot be recorded even for virtue's sake, not even as a scaring warning to show the horrible possibilities of vice."⁽³⁾ Tirebuck attempts to penetrate Dorrie's thoughts and feelings, and achieves some success in psychological analysis, but he adopts the attitudes and verbal habits of the preacher when he writes of the circumstances of Dorrie's becoming a prostitute. After describing her initiation into the entertainment provided by the "Infants' School", he writes:

The worst, saddest, and most appalling association of The Infants' School was the reeking system of immorality immediately around it though not in connection with it - a system in which youths were men, girls were women, men were brutes, and women were beasts, living in streets (many since cleared away) like alleys, in courts like traps, and in cellars and garrets that were the very cesspools for moral and material human rot... (4)

(1) A shortened version of the review is printed in the Fitzroy edition of Acton's book, pp. 225-231. Quotation from p. 226.

(2) Mary Barton, ch.xxxviii.

(3) Tirebuck, op.cit., ch.xlvii.

(4) Ibid., ch.xxx.

The generalizations and the use of emotive words such as "reeking", "brutes", "cesspools" and "rot", which are shocked evasions, proclaim the didactic writer. In Workers in the Dawn Gissing adopts a superior stance when he uses the language of good and evil⁽¹⁾:

This Polly Hemp was as evil-looking a personage as one could encounter in the streets of London. Not that she was ugly in her features, for she had, indeed, what some would call a fine face. But it was the expression of this face which impressed the beholder more than its mere outlines, and that was wholly and absolutely evil. She had greenish eyes, out of which gleamed malice, and cunning, and lust, and every bad passion which could be imagined as lurking in a woman's heart...This woman could never have been other (2) than evil-minded.

The ideals of womanhood by which the prostitute was judged and found wanting may be deduced both from details in the novels and stories being examined, and from other contemporary writing about the woman's character and rôle. In this area the attitudes of fiction-writers and observers such as Acton diverge less than in the presentation of the prostitute's character and way of life.

The importance of pre-marital chastity has already been mentioned in connection with seduction. Fictional embodiments are too numerous to list and too well known to require exemplification. However, the chaste middle-class heroine is present in some fictional treatments of prosti-

(1) His attitude is to be distinguished from that of the writer who uses such language as a means of making moral discriminations, as Mrs. Gaskell does, for example.

(2) Workers in the Dawn, book III, ch.viii.

tution to provide a framework of ideals: Rose Maylie and Helen Norman are two such characters; Ellen in Alton Locke is a working-class embodiment of the ideal but a less powerful presence because she is, in her own words, "a poor, ill-favoured creature."⁽¹⁾ An observation in Acton's book places moral evaluation of prostitution in the context of the ideal of chastity:

The great substitution of chastity for female honour has run through and dislocated all the system... (2)

The prostitute falls short of the middle-class Victorian ideal of womanhood in another, related matter: she is unable to inspire in the man who loves her the zeal for moral and spiritual purity which is the woman's peculiar contribution to the relationship. Acton claims that the prostitute leads man to make of woman "a toy, a plaything, an animated doll; a thing to wear like a glove, and fling away; to use like a horse and to send to the knackers when worn out; the mere object of his fancy and servant of his appetite, instead of an immortal being, composed, like himself, of body, soul and spirit — his associate and consort, endowed with memory and hope and strong affections, with a heart to love, to feel, to suffer..."⁽³⁾ The prostitute also devalues her woman's nature by taking too lightly the importance of motherhood.

(1) Kingsley, Alton Locke (London, 1850), ch.viii.

(2) Acton, op.cit., p. 60.

(3) Ibid., p. 120.

Tennyson's The Princess contains a clear expression of this aspect of the feminine ideal in a description of the Prince's mother:

"No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who looked all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall (1)
He shall not blind his soul with clay".

SOCIETY'S RESPONSIBILITY

Although underlying the fictional treatment of prostitution is the assumption that its root cause is man's natural sinfulness, its immediate social and economic causes are also important in the fictional debate. Three main ones are represented in the novels and stories being examined:- low wages for women workers, particularly in the "sweated" trades; poor living conditions; and the pressures on a middle-class man to marry only when he has earned sufficient money to provide a suitable establishment for his wife.

The prostitutes most sympathetically treated are those who turn to prostitution because of low wages. Acton says of such women:

(1) Tennyson, The Princess (London, 1847), canto viii, ll. 301-312.

This numerous band...are the proper objects of sympathy. London holds hundreds of them, not too far gone for true, permanent reform; and success would richly reward a far larger expenditure than can be expected at the hands (1) of private charity.

In Alton Locke Kingsley presents prostitutes collectively in the moralist's denunciations. However, condemnation is very much tempered in his treatment of the individual, Lizzie. It is not possible to forget the moral issue — Lizzie pronounces her own Christian judgement — but the explanation she gives for turning to prostitution is disarming and has an important rôle in the rhetoric of Kingsley's propaganda against the ends of the "sweated" industries.

"Repent — I have repented — I repent of it every hour — I hate myself, and hate all the world because of it; but I must — I must; I cannot see her starve, and I cannot starve myself. When she first fell sick she kept on as long as she could, doing what she could, and then between us we only earned three shillings a week, and there was ever so much to take off for fire, and twopence for thread, and fivepence for candles; and then we were always getting fined, because they never gave us out the work till too late on purpose, and then they lowered the prices again; and now Ellen can't work at all, and there's four of us with the old lady, to keep off two's work that couldn't keep (2) themselves alone".

The cases of Sally and Ida in The Unclassed are likewise presented as issues of survival. Gissing ensures a sympathetic response in his readers, partly by recording Waymark's sympathy for both of them, partly by making Sally a fresh and

(1) Acton, op.cit., p. 40.

(2) Kingsley, op.cit., ch.viii.

attractive and Ida a thoughtful person. Gissing does not suggest that Ida has nothing to expiate - otherwise his account of her self-imposed discipline of purification would drive him into irony or ridicule - but there is no moralizing comment. The poverty-stricken work girl as prostitute is also the central character in Adcock's story 'Tilly's Sister'. For this story Adcock uses a situation which received much publicity and evoked widespread sympathy for working girls, the match-girls' strike of 1888.⁽¹⁾ This in itself would disarm contemporary readers. Adcock does use the language of the moralist, but a moralist with strong sympathies for the girl forced to make a decision of the kind he presents as teasing and impossible to resolve satisfactorily:

...during the two wintry weeks of privation that ensued, one of the strikers, as forlorn as herself, told her of a path that ran through hell into those earthly heavens of her desire; she remembered her little sister's starved face, the sordid toil and weariness of the past, and (2) there was nothing to hold her back.

Both Acton and Hemyng saw poor living conditions as contributory factors to the high incidence of prostitution.

-
- (1) At a Fabian Society meeting attention was drawn to the meagre wages paid by Bryant and May Ltd., who gave large dividends to their shareholders. Some of those present at the meeting, including Annie Besant, published the facts under the title 'White Slavery in London'. When one of the match-girls refused to sign a document asserting that she was happy in her work, she was dismissed, and all the girls went on strike. Herbert Burrows and Mrs. Besant campaigned intensively for the next fortnight, and a settlement was reached with the help of the London Trades Council.
- (2) Adcock, 'Tilly's Sister', East End Idylls (London, 1897).

The thread linking bad housing with prostitution was the concealed demoralization of children who, in overcrowded conditions, came to accept "the promiscuous herding of the sexes".⁽¹⁾ According to Acton, some lodging-houses were particularly responsible for fostering insensitivity to vice:

In these detestable haunts of vice men, women and children are received indiscriminately, and pass the night huddled together, without distinction of age or sex, not merely in one common room, but often one common bed; even if privacy is desired, it is impossible of attainment; no accommodation is made for decency, and the practices of the inmates are on a par with the accommodation...By constant practice, vice has become a second nature; with such associates, children of tender years soon become old in vice. (2)

Nancy is the product of an unwholesome environment from which she cannot escape. Her words to Rose Maylie point to her representative rôle:

"I am the infamous creature you have heard of, that lives among the thieves, and that never from the first moment I can recollect my eyes and senses opening on London streets have known any better life, or kinder words than they have given me, so help me God!" (3)

The interview between Rose Maylie and Nancy is an important element in the moral pattern of the book as a whole: the handling of this episode, with its emphasis on Nancy's shame and Rose's purity, shows Dickens the moralist to be more in evidence than Dickens the environmentalist.

(1) Acton, op.cit., p. 130.

(2) Ibid., p. 132

(3) Dickens, op.cit., ch.xl.

The balance between the individual's responsibility and that of society for the descent of a girl into prostitution is most delicate in the treatment of prostitutes who were seduced. Although Augustus Whiffle is callous and irresponsible, Carrie herself is morally hardly more sensitive. Esther's seducer abandoned her, we learn from her account of her past experiences, but the emphasis in the novel is on the shame which Esther feels. Only Adcock challenges conventional morality. In 'The Spectre of a Sin' and 'The Soul of Penelope Sanders' he implies that the women were wronged and that their "sin" is cancelled by the magnanimity which each shows in circumstances in which it might be least expected. Penelope Sanders helps a destitute man, whom she recognizes as her former seducer. In spite of her resolution to abandon her impure life, she prostitutes herself in order to obtain money with which to buy food for him; and Adcock implies that this represents no violation of her vow. 'The Spectre of a Sin' reinforces a similar vindication of the prostitute with an attack on hypocrisy. The father of the child rescued by the prostitute appears to be a religious man; the prostitute's generosity is made to seem the more remarkable because in him she recognizes her seducer.

Moral convention, tempered by an awareness of society's guilt rather than class prejudice characterizes the treatment of working-class prostitutes in Victorian literature, Gissing's Portrayal of Carrie Mitchell, however, is imbued with a con-

tempt for, and a revulsion from, what he considered to be essentially working-class vulgarisms of thought and feeling. There is evidence in the stories by Adcock that late nineteenth-century representations of prostitution are indulgent towards the prostitute, but Tirebuck's Dorrie is in the didactic tradition of Kingsley and Dickens, despite the element of psychological realism in the characterization of Dorrie herself.

CHAPTER VI

WORKING CONDITIONS AND LABOUR RELATIONS

In this chapter I shall deal with fictional treatments of working conditions and labour relations in factory industries and mining separately from those in workshops and the "sweated" trades.⁽¹⁾ There is, of course, some overlapping: the effects of long hours and poor pay were felt by workers in all these sectors, and some of the suggested means of alleviating evils, such as legislative control, were universally applicable. However, there are several historical reasons for dividing the chapter along the lines defined

-
- (1) Charles Booth points out that the term "sweating" was used with a variety of connotations by the 1880s, and he identifies the following as the main sweating systems:
 - (i) In the clothing trades wholesale manufacturers make a contract with someone who hires workpeople, while themselves supplying and preparing materials.
 - (ii) In trades which employ female home-workers, a middle-man distributes and collects the work on behalf of a wholesale house.
 - (iii) In cabinet-making, the wholesale house, instead of ordering beforehand what it needs, buys from those who sell labour and materials together.
 - (iv) In a sweating system employing foreign immigrants, the chambermaster (a small master in the tailoring trade) employs a constant supply of learners ("greeners") who work long hours for little pay.
 - (v) In the Docks systematic deductions are made from men's earnings by labour masters who keep for themselves the difference between authorized pay and the lowest competition value of the work. In his examination of the subject of sweating, Booth takes as his starting-point the evils popularly associated with a variety of systems of organization and with the term "sweated trades". See Life and Labour of the People, first edition, vol. I (London and Edinburgh, 1889), pp. 481-97.

above. Factory industries more commonly employed people in large numbers under one roof than was the case in other manufacturing businesses. In 1867 the existing system of factory legislation was made applicable to all factories employing more than fifty workers, while workshops were placed under the supervision of local authorities. A division between factories and workshops was recognized in legislation until 1878, when they were brought together under a single system of state inspection. In the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in the 1830s and '40s, there was a welter of acts controlling factory industries and mines, but workshops and the sweated trades on the whole came later under official scrutiny: in 1838 a Select Committee of the House of Lords published its first report on the sweating system, the evils of which called forth legislation in the twentieth century.⁽¹⁾ Workshop and sweated industries were differently organized from factories in that they often employed middlemen. There were also rough geographical divisions: the factory industries were situated mostly in the north (although mines and steelworks were to be found elsewhere, as in South Wales), while London and the Midlands were centres for workshop trades, such as nail-making and jewellery. A further difference between factory and workshop trades lies in the response of the workers to their pay and

(1) The first major attempt to control the abuses of sweating came in 1909, when under the Trade Boards Act a legal minimum wage was instituted in a small number of very ill-paid women's trades.

conditions: trade unionism flourished among factory workers, whereas those in workshops and at home were slow to combine.⁽¹⁾

FACTORIES

For this section of the chapter I shall draw mainly upon novels written between 1832 and 1855. Although there was subsequently a steady trickle of books set in the industrial north⁽²⁾, the most thoughtful and questioning treatments of industrial conditions and labour relations are to be found in a group of novels which were written during this mid-century period. Manchester in particular attracted the attention of novelists who were also "social reformers":-- Dickens and Disraeli, who both visited the city in 1843; Mrs. Frances Trollope, who travelled there in 1839 to find material for her novel Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy; and Mrs. Gaskell, who lived in Manchester and wrote about it in Mary Barton and North and South. Manchester is the setting of Mrs. Tonna's Helen Fleetwood and Harriet Martineau's 'A Manchester Strike' in Illustrations of Political Economy (1832-34).

(i) Factory Life and its Effects

Not all novels about factory workers take their readers inside a mill or factory. Mrs. Frances Trollope

(1) See Parliamentary Papers, First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System (London, Edinburgh and Dublin, 1888), q. 1953.

(2) Examples include The Shuttle of Fate (1896) by Caroline Masters, Bellamy (1914) by Elinor Mordaunt, and Windyridge (1913) by W. Riley.

had introductions from Lord Ashley to manufacturers to enable her to find material for Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy, but we have no evidence that Mrs. Tonna ever entered a factory, even though her major industrial novel, Helen Fleetwood, contains many details of the experiences of factory workers in their jobs. However, there were other sources available to her. Ivanka Kovačević and Barbara Kanner trace some of her material:

She was the first of the social-problem fiction writers to translate the recorded testimony of witnesses in parliamentary books into dialogue for her novels. In Helen Fleetwood we can trace the substance of the conversations of such of her characters as Tom South, Richard Green, and Hudson to official documents like the Sadler Committee Report, the pamphlets of such reformists as Peter Gaskell, Richard Oastler, James Kay...and R.D. Grainger, the speeches of Lord Ashley, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, and even contemporary police⁽¹⁾ reports.

Mrs. Gaskell does not take her readers inside a factory but she had close knowledge of Manchester working people. In the preface to Mary Barton she refers to her contact with them:

A little attention to the expression of feelings on the part of some of the work-people with whom I was acquainted, had laid open to me the hearts of one or two of the more thoughtful among them...⁽²⁾

There is also evidence in her letters that she was active in social work among the Manchester poor who included factory

(1) Ivanka Kovačević and S. Barbara Kanner, 'Blue Book into Novel: The Forgotten Industrial Fiction of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', Nineteenth Century Fiction 25 (September 1970), pp. 152-173.

(2) Mrs. Gaskell, Mary Barton (London, 1848), preface.

workers. For example, in a letter to Eliza Fox (29th May 1849) she says that the character of John Barton was based upon a person of her acquaintance:

...the circumstances are different but the character and some of the speeches are exactly⁽¹⁾ a poor man I know.

Attacks on the ill-effects of the factory system draw attention to both the physical and moral damage sustained by factory workers⁽²⁾; and both of these effects may be observed outside the factory walls. There seems, therefore, no reason to regard with scepticism the works mentioned simply because their authors did not have first-hand knowledge of the inside of a mill.

In Helen Fleetwood there is a sustained account of the conditions inside a cotton factory. Because it embodies a number of aspects of mid-nineteenth-century treatment of working conditions I shall quote it in full and use it as the starting point of an analysis of this and other contemporary novels:

Excluded from the free air, and almost from the pure light of day; shut up in an atmosphere polluted by clouds of fetid breath, and all the sickening exhalations of a crowded human mass, whose unwashed, overworked bodies were also in many cases diseased, and by the suffocating dust that rose on every side; relaxed by an intensity of artificial heat which their constitutions were

(1) Mrs. Gaskell's Letters, edited by Chapple and Pollard (Manchester, 1966). See also the following letters:- 173 (pp. 267-68), 384 (pp. 487-94), 424, (pp. 548-49), 526 (pp. 704-05). The letters in this group were written after the publication of Mary Barton and North and South.

(1) The nature of mid-nineteenth-century interest and concern is reflected in the title of a book by one of the leading medical men of the day, James Kay's Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes (1832).

never framed to encounter in the temperate clime where God had placed them; doubly fevered, doubly debilitated, by excessive toil, not measured by human capacity to sustain it but by the powers of machinery obeying an inexhaustible impetus; badly clothed, wretchedly fed, and exposed, moreover, to fasts of unnatural length even from that miserable fare; who can marvel if, under such a system, the robust adult speedily acquires a sickly state of body, and a morbid state of feeling, leading at once to the most awful perversion of mind and corruption of morals? But it is not of adults we (1) are called to speak, it is of children...

(a) Child Workers

Fictional treatments of factory life in the mid-nineteenth century give prominence to children and young people in factories. In Helen Fleetwood all Mrs. Wright's children work or have worked in a factory, and Mary Green and Helen Fleetwood join them; Michael Armstrong's description of factory life is presented through the experiences of Michael and his brother Edward and of the pauper apprentices in the Deep Valley Mill; Sybil's factory workers—Devilsdust, Dandy Mick, Caroline, Julia and Harriet—are young people; Harriet Martineau's 'A Manchester Strike' describes the life of the Allens and their daughter, Martha, who works in a cotton mill; and Bessie Higgins in North and South is a former child millworker. There are two possible explanations of this preoccupation with children in the factory, both of which may obtain within the same novel or story. The first

(1) Mrs. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Helen Fleetwood (London, 1839-40), ch.x.

is historical: children were extensively employed especially in the cotton industry, which, by 1835 had 28,771 child-workers under 13, and 27,251 young employees between 13 and 18⁽¹⁾. The 1830s and 1840s were times of legislation covering the employment of children in factories.⁽²⁾ The second possible explanation for the concentration on child factory-workers is literary: a child victim of poor conditions is likely to evoke more sympathy than an adult and is therefore a valuable constituent in propagandist writing against the evils of the factory system. David Copperfield's unhappy time in the blacking factory, Oliver Twist's experiences in the criminal underworld, and Jo's vulnerability to disease, harassment and exploitation in Bleak House indicate that Dickens was well aware of the appeal of the child victim of social disorders.

Selection and presentation of material about child factory-workers is aimed to shock: an important corollary

-
- (1) For further details about the exploitation of child labour see E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1963), pp. 366 - 384 in the Penguin edition (1968).
- (2) Under the provisions of the 1833 Factory Act children under nine were not to be employed in factories other than silk mills; children between nine and thirteen were not to work more than forty-eight hours a week, or nine a day; and young persons from fourteen to eighteen were not to work more than sixty-nine hours a week, or twelve a day. The Ten Hours Act of 1847 applied to all textile factories and introduced a maximum ten-hour working day for women and children. In 1850 there was an Amending Act to eliminate the abuses of the relay system, which added to adults' hours of labour and enabled employers to keep children at work early and late. Michael Armstrong includes a conversation between Mary Brotherton and the Rev. Mr. Bell, in which the clergyman advocates the introduction of a Ten Hours Act.

of the horrifying details is the claim that they represent the truth. Mrs. Tonna says of the material in her book:

Let no one suppose we are going to write fiction, or to conjure up phantoms of a heated imagination, to aid the cause which we avowedly embrace. Names may be altered, characters may be grouped, with some latitude of license, but not an incident shall be coined to serve the purpose, however good, so far as relates to the main subject - that is, to the factories of our free and happy England. Vivid, indeed, and fertile in devices must be the fancy that could invent a horror beyond the bare, every-day reality of the thing! (1)

She draws attention to the most startling and immediately visible ill-effects of factory work to which children were primarily susceptible, physical deformities and injury from ill-treatment by overlookers. (2) The grotesque appearance of Sarah Wright is the more shocking because it is delayed: the Widow Green and her charges are not introduced to the deformed child immediately, because her mother is afraid of letting her be seen by people new to the factory town.

Mrs. Trollope also dwells on the corporal punishment of factory children and the dangers of injury from machines. However, she devotes the core of her account of a child's experience of factory life to a description of Deep Valley Mill, a factory employing pauper apprentices. She drew her material from an account of Robert Blincoe's life in a

(1) Mrs. Tonna, *op.cit.*, ch.iv.

(2) Portrayal of physical damage caused by factory work is not, of course, confined to its effects on children. Jane Wilson in *Mary Barton* is the victim of unboxed machinery; Martha in *Helen Fleetwood* dies in childbirth, because her health has suffered in the factory.

Derbyshire factory in the second decade of the century. (1)

By choosing this source Mrs. Trollope ran the risk of attack on the grounds that her picture was out of date. Ivanka

Kovačević comments:

In one important respect the social criticism of Michael Armstrong was already dated: by 1839 establishments like the Deep Valley Mill were far from common, since factories were concentrated in the big industrial cities where the child labourers lived at home and so had totally different problems to cope with. The conditions at Deep Valley Mill, as described by Frances Trollope, therefore reflect an earlier period when factories were located in isolated valleys where rivers provided the source (2) of power.

However, E.P. Thompson points out that isolated mills were to be found in secluded valleys in the Pennines at the time when Mrs. Trollope was writing Michael Armstrong. In their selection of situations for their young factory-workers both Mrs. Tonna and Mrs. Trollope omit such examples as the Bradford mills of Wood and Walker and the Fieldens' cotton factory in Todmorden, where children and adults were accorded enlightened treatment. (3)

In their presentation of the ill-treatment of children and young people in factories Mrs. Tonna and Mrs. Trollope differ in that Michael Armstrong ends in romantic escapism whereas Helen Fleetwood works solemnly and relentlessly towards tragedy directly attributable to conditions in factory

-
- (1) John Brown, 'Original Biography, Memoir of Robert Blincoe', The Lion (January 1828-December 1829).
 - (2) Kovacevic, Fact into Fiction (Leicester, 1975), part I, p.101.
 - (3) See William Dodd, The Factory System Illustrated (London, 1842), pp. 41-49 and pp. 144-8.

and town. The tragedy has its climax in Helen's death from lung disease caused by the fluff in the atmosphere of the carding-room in which she works.⁽¹⁾ Although there is ponderous satire in Mrs. Trollope's treatment of the "villains", such as Sir Matthew Dowling, the language of both Helen Fleetwood and Michael Armstrong is impassioned and earnest in passages describing working conditions:

Mrs. Trollope writes of Brookford cotton mill:

...what the eye brings home to the heart of those, who look round upon the horrid earthly hell, is enough to make it all forgotten; for who can think of villanous smells, or heed the suffering of the ear-racking sounds, while they look upon hundreds of helpless children, divested of every trace of hearth, of joyousness, and even of youth! ...Lean and distorted limbs — sallow and sunken cheeks — dim hollow eyes, that speak unrest and most unnatural carefulness, give to each tiny, trembling, unelastic form, a look of hideous premature old age. (2)

Mrs. Tonna draws upon the comparison between child labourers and slaves used by Richard Oastler in a letter to the Leeds Mercury on 29 September 1830. She attributes to the widow reflections on the paradox that a "free" country operates a system of slavery:

"...we are in England; and it is not possible that in this English town there should be some thousands of slaves — white slaves — free-born slaves — and my own children among them." (3)

If the writing of both these authors seems shrill at times, it is important to remember the mental climate in which

(1) Bessy Higgins in North and South dies from the same cause. She too worked in the carding-room of a cotton mill.

(2) Mrs. Trollope, op.cit., ch.viii.

(3) Mrs. Tonna, op.cit., ch.xi.

they worked. As Thompson points out, the proliferation of Blue Books did not necessarily signify a passionate commitment to the cause of the under-privileged:

The Blue Books (at least until we came to the great sanitary enquiries) were not the product of "an age" or the fruit of "a generation", but a battle-ground in which reformers and obstructionists fought; and in which humanitarian causes, (1) as often as not, were buried.

It is possible that aristocratic Tory attacks upon supposed abuses in the factory system — by Disraeli and Ashley, for example — were in part politically motivated, having their genesis in fear of the growing power of the middle classes. It is also possible that some of the factory workers' evidence, adducing bad conditions and harsh treatments, was unreliable. Certainly there was well-publicized and authoritative resistance to anyone who attempted to prick the middle-class conscience. Andrew Ure, a doctor, defended the contemporary features of child employment in factories in the following terms:

I have visited many factories, both in Manchester and in the surrounding districts, during a period of several months, entering the spinning rooms, unexpectedly, and often alone, at different times of the day, and I never saw a single instance of corporal chastisement inflicted on a child, nor indeed did I ever see children in ill-humour. They seemed to be always cheerful and alert, taking pleasure in the light play of their muscles, — enjoying the mobility natural to their age. The scene of industry, so far from exciting sad emotions in my mind, was always exhilarating...The work of these lively elves seemed to resemble a sport, in which habit gave them a pleasing dexterity. Conscious of their skill, they were delighted to show (2) it off to any stranger.

(1) Thompson, op.cit., p. 376.

(2) Andrew Ure, The Philosophy of Manufactures (London, 1835), p. 301.

(b) The Character of the Factory Worker

In the passage from Helen Fleetwood on the ill-effects of factory life, quoted above, Mrs. Tonna draws a vaguely defined connection between factory work and demoralizing influences. Main causes of concern, in both fiction and non-fiction, were the religious scepticism and apathy of the factory-employed population, their depravity, and their ignorance. I shall examine each of these in turn as they are treated by novelists and other contemporary commentators on industrial life. The two main sources will be James Kay's The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes⁽¹⁾, which concentrates on Manchester, and The Factory System Illustrated, a series of letters by William Dodd, who described himself as "a factory cripple" in the sub-title. The first is the more reliable, but together they provide both a middle- and a working-class view of the factory population and working conditions in the industrial north, contemporaneous with the novels to be discussed.

(1) Religious scepticism and apathy

Kay claims to have evidence from his own experience of the Sunday worship among the factory population of Manchester. He analyses the working-class Sunday as follows:

(1) Dr. James Phillips Kay changed his name to Kay-Shuttleworth when he married Janet Shuttleworth in 1842. All references are to the second, enlarged edition, also published in 1832, and reprinted by Cass and Co. in 1970.

With rare exceptions, the adults of the vast population of 84,147 contained in Districts Nos. 1,2,3 and 4, spend Sunday either in supine sloth, in sensuality, or in listless activity. A certain portion only of the labouring classes enjoys even healthful recreation on that day, and a very small (1) number frequent the places of worship.

He attributes the religious apathy and ignorance of the factory population to an insufficiency of suitable teachers in some of the poorest districts of the city. Some of the advantages of material progress may be frittered away because of the absence of religious feeling from a large section of the population:

The fruits of external prosperity may speedily be (2) blighted by the absence of internal virtue.

It also jeopardizes the moral health of the social body:

The absence of religious feeling, the neglect of all religious ordinances, affords substantive evidence of so great a moral degradation of the community, as to ensure a concomitant civic debasement. (3)

Wanda Neff, in Victorian Working Women, qualifies the disturbing impression given by Kay: she points out that Methodism was strong in the North, but endorses the opinion that many factory-workers were unreached because there were too few churches and too few clergymen to meet the great increase in population in the towns. (4)

Religious sceptics in fiction about factory-workers

-
- (1) James Kay, The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester (London, 1832), second edition (1832), pp. 64-65.
 - (2) Ibid., p. 65.
 - (3) Ibid., p. 63.
 - (4) See Thompson, op.cit., ch.xi, for an evaluation of the influence of Methodism on the working-classes in the early nineteenth century.

include Higgins in North and South and South in Helen Fleetwood. Mrs. Gaskell moderates the impact of Higgins' scepticism by presenting it, not as the sign of a rebellious streak in his character, but as the only honest position of a man who has not found a satisfactory creed:

...he was infidel so far as he had never yet found any form of faith to which he could attach himself, (1)
heart and soul.

The conscientious nature of Higgins' scepticism is relevant to the rôle he occupies when the union comes into conflict with the employers: the union's case, stated to Margaret Hale by Higgins, is not likely to be seen as the response of a hot-headed, naturally insubordinate group of people.

However, Mrs. Gaskell would be putting the mark of approval on trade-union attitudes and activities if she were to make Higgins a whole-hearted Christian; and the way in which she resolves the story, with little influence accorded to the trade unions, suggests that she does not wish to commit herself so far. Tom South does not fare so well at the hands of Mrs. Tonna. Although many of his criticisms of the factory system are admitted to be just, he fails to live up to the ideals to which he claims to adhere, and strikes the reader as a shallow character. South enjoys complaining, and his religious scepticism seems to be merely a facet of his negativity.

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, North and South (London, 1854-55), ch.xxviii. First published weekly in Household Words, 2 September 1854 - 27 January 1855.

Apathy rather than conscientious scepticism characterizes the Widow Green's daughter and her husband, who stay in bed on Sunday morning, while their Christian relatives, fresh from the country, sing an early-morning hymn, in the hope of stirring the consciences of their hosts. Nowhere in the book does Mrs. Tonna's evangelical fervour declare itself as clearly as in this episode. It overrides sympathy for the weariness of the factory-worker, which she shows elsewhere, and her judgement seems harsh, even though she takes into account the ineffectual spiritual leadership of the clergy, which she illustrates through her portrayal of the Church of England parson. Mrs. Green's request for help from him is unproductive because he has taken the easiest course available to him and found specious scriptural justification for acquiescence in the social and economic results of industrialization.⁽¹⁾ Mrs. Trollope suggests that the child-operative's experience of religion is unlikely to inculcate in him a church-going habit. The Sunday School she describes in Michael Armstrong is run by two unsympathetic task-masters.

Failure to attend church does not always provoke outraged authorial comment in the novels under review - nothing is said of Mary Barton's apparent independence of

(1) Miss Grace of All Souls' exposes weaknesses in the Church's response to the human problems of industrialization. In Tirebuck's novel the Church is not merely ineffectual; it is also corrupt, in that many of its clergy are motivated by materialism and behave hypocritically.

any place of worship - and sincere religious convictions are attributed to many working people in books by several authors: Job Legh, Bessy Higgins, the Davenports in Mrs. Gaskell's novels, Stephen Blackpool in Hard Times, Sarah Wright and Kate Maloney's father in Helen Fleetwood and the Allen family in 'A Manchester Strike' come into this category. Although she attacks the trade-union policy of going on strike, Harriet Martineau creates in Allen a thoughtful and responsible leader, who is also a Christian: his family attends church regularly, and he shows concern that Sunday should be reverently observed.⁽¹⁾ By contrast, in his portrayal of Stephen Blackpool, Dickens connects Christian humility with refusal to belong to a trade union. Blackpool's religion is largely passive: he is a martyr, to inequitable laws, an employer's insensitivity and to his fellow-workers' timidity, and from his death Dickens draws a moral comforting to the poor:

The star had shown him where to find the God of the poor; and through humility, and sorrow, and forgiveness, he had gone to his Redeemer's rest. (2)

This presentation of Stephen creates one of the book's unresolved tensions. Although the misery of a factory-hand's life has been evoked through the book's images and analysed in a critique of utilitarian attitudes, allusion to

(1) Harriet Martineau makes Allen a moderate, prepared to listen sympathetically to the employer's case.

(2) Dickens, Hard Times (London, 1854), book III, ch.vi. First published weekly in Household Words, 1 April - 12 August 1854.

the Beatitude, "Blessed are the poor, for they shall see God" suggests ambivalence, with recognition of the need for social reform and resignation to the continued existence of poverty, through which men are glorified, as antithetical elements.

(2) Depravity

The Commissioners' Second Report on the Employment of Children (1843) saw young factory-workers as characterized "by a general ignorance of moral duties and sanctions, and by an absence of moral and religious restraint, shown among some classes chiefly by coarseness of manners, and the use of profane and indecent language; but in other classes by the practice of gross immorality, which is prevalent to a great extent, in both sexes, at very early ages."⁽¹⁾

Wanda Neff points out that popular opinion represented the factory girl as morally lax; but she suggests that evidence was sometimes flimsy: it was often based on inexact figures of the number of illegitimate children born to girls in certain mills. She adds that the conditions in which cotton operatives worked involved their foregoing certain proprieties: they had to wear scanty clothing, and changing

(1) Second Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children (Trades and Manufactures), 1843; Parliamentary Papers, vol. XIII, pp. 195-204. Quoted in E. Royston Pike, Human Documents of the Industrial Revolution in Britain (London, 1966), p. 204.

and sanitary facilities were poor. (1)

Both Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Tonna refer to a popular, unflattering image of the factory-girl. John Barton refuses to let Mary work in a factory, but his grounds for doing so relate to the independence and opportunity for self-indulgence which the factory-girl's wages will buy her:

"That's the worst of factory work, for girls. They can earn so much when work is plenty, that they can maintain themselves any how. My Mary shall never work in a factory, that I'm determined on. (2)

However, there is a suggestion later that Barton has other reasons for not wanting Mary to go into a factory:

His most practical thought was getting Mary apprenticed to a dressmaker; for he had never left off disliking a factory for a girl, on more accounts than one. (3)

There is more detailed and explicit comment in Helen Fleetwood. In a discussion on the evils of the factory system among a group of neighbours, Mrs. Johnson says:

(1) Neff, Victorian Working Women (New York, 1929), ch.ii. Kay (op.cit.) refers briefly to the difficulty of assessing the extent of sexual laxity among factory-workers. She points out that no record exists by which the number of illegitimate births may be ascertained, and he adds:

Even this evidence would form a very imperfect rule by which to judge of the comparative prevalence of sensuality. (P. 62).

He also points to an improvement in working conditions in the mills:

Thus, some years ago, the internal arrangement of mills (now so much improved) as regarded temperature, ventilation, cleanliness, and the proper separation of the sexes, etc., were such as to be extremely objectionable. (P. 80).

(2) Mary Barton, ch.i.

(3) Ibid., ch.iii.

"To be sure, not one girl in fifty keeps her character clean; and to be sure there isn't a small tradesman's wife would not think herself disgraced to take a factory girl for a servant; but what so many do doesn't look as bad as if only a few did it." (1)

When Richard Green visits the "model" factory, in which Hudson suggests that Helen might work, he is distressed by "the mixing of young people of different sexes, and the sort of conversation that seemed to be passing among them". (2) Mrs. Tonna implies that the language and behaviour is even worse than she shows it to be, by referring to her self-imposed censorship:

Blasphemy and indecency may, they do abound, turning every mill into a pandemonium; but it is not needful to sully our pages with either. Let the pestilence preserve the cloud of darkness in which it walks, we only desire to shew the withered remains of its poor blighted victims. (3)

Mrs. Tonna blurs the distinction between coarseness of manner and moral depravity, implying that both are characteristic of factory-workers. Mrs. Gaskell distinguishes between manners and total personality, and she does not see uncouthness as a sign of depravity. (4) In a description of a group of factory-girls in North and South she shows their brashness and essential friendliness, as well as Margaret's over-fastidious reaction to them:

(1) Mrs. Tonna, op.cit., ch.vi.

(2) Ibid., ch.xix.

(3) Ibid., ch.iv.

(4) Cf. Dickens, The Old Curiosity Shop, ch.xiv. Dickens makes much of the contrast between the labourer's uncouth appearance and his gentleness which, in this idealized portrait, also extends to his manners.

They came rushing along, with bold, fearless faces, and loud laughs and jests, particularly aimed at all those who appeared to be above them in rank or station. The tones of their unrestrained voices, and their carelessness of all common rules of street politeness, frightened Margaret a little at first. The girls, with their rough, but not unfriendly freedom, would comment on her dress, even touch her shawl or gown to ascertain the exact material; nay, once or twice she was asked questions relative to some article which they particularly admired. (1)

An important aspect of Mrs. Gaskell's presentation of Margaret's early contact with factory people is the perception that they are different from the agricultural workers of rural Hampshire because their conditions and the social relations arising from the type of work they do are different. What sometimes appears as uncouthness to the outsider is outspokenness; and the abrasiveness of manner may be the result of a clash of cultures. When Margaret expresses her intention of visiting Bessy and her father, as she was used to calling on the villagers of Helstone, she is disconcerted by Higgins' brusque response, not realizing that her visit might seem impertinent. However, Mrs. Gaskell represents Higgins as sufficiently sensitive to see Margaret's embarrassment and to recognize the sincerity of her wish to get to know himself and Bessy:

"Yo're a foreigner, as one may say, and maybe don't know many folk here, and yo've given my wench here flowers out of yo'r own hand;- yo' may come if yo' (2) like."

(1) North and South, ch.viii.

(2) Ibid.

The factory operatives' drinking habits are described and analysed by Dodd and Kay. Dodd writes of the working-class population of Chorley:-

The manners and customs of the lower orders (who are chiefly dependent on the factories) are of a very inferior description; drinking and smoking being quite common to both sexes...in this part of Lancashire, the women enjoy their pipe and glass in company with the men, without considering they are lowering their dignity in the least. I am told a very great quantity of gin (or rather a compound bearing the name of gin) is consumed here. (1)

In this letter Dodd refers to, and quotes from, Kay's expressions of concern about the popularity of gin-shops in some parts of Manchester. He claims that gin-shops, taverns (2) and beer-houses are most numerous among the poorest people. He sees them as "sources of vice" and includes among the evil effects of their proliferation immoral and criminal behaviour, an increase in the incidence of insanity caused by "an addiction to the use of ardent spirits" (3) and a threat to good order in towns. However, although both Dodd and Kay use the language of moral denunciation in their references to the drinking habits of the factory population, their analysis of the causes of intemperance points to a more compassionate attitude. The wretchedness of the home is one suggested cause. A second is the nature of factory work, which is

(1) William Dodd, op. cit., p. 99.

(2) A tavern is defined by Harrison in Drink and the Victorians as a drinking place selling spirits, controlled by magistrates, and catering for the casual drinker.

(3) Kay, op. cit., p. 60.

hot and tiring, especially in cotton mills, and which takes the operative into an atmosphere thick with dust and fluff. A third cause, analysed in detail by Kay, is the mental depression, resulting from a physical disorder induced by factory work:

We cannot wonder that the wretched victim of this disease, invited by those haunts of misery and crime, the gin shop and the tavern, as he passes to his daily labour, should endeavour to cheat his suffering of a few moments, by the false excitement procured by ardent spirits... (1)

Of the individualized factory workers in Mrs. Gaskell's two industrial novels, only Nicholas Higgins is presented as a drinker. However, he is never drunk, and his temptation to drink immediately after Bessy's death is seen as excusable in view of his strong affection for the girl. Higgins' lapses are treated with a gravity which may seem out of proportion to their extent, unless the present-day reader takes into account both the availability of spirits and beer in a city such as Manchester and the example set by other factory workers. Jane Wilson's disapproval of wives who work in factories and neglect their houses is based on a belief that their husbands are likely to be tempted into public houses and gin palaces:-

"...ay, nine men I know, as has been driven to th' public-house by having wives as worked in factories; good folk, too, as thought there was no harm in putting their little ones out at nurse, and letting their house go all dirty, and their fires all out; and that was a place as was tempting for a husband to stay in, was it? He soon finds out gin shops, where all is clean and bright, and

(1) Ibid., p. 26.

where the fire blazes cheerily, and gives a man⁽¹⁾
a welcome as it were."

Mrs. Gaskell does not herself appear in the role of preacher: concern about the drinking habits of factory hands in general and Nicholas Higgins in particular is expressed through a working-class character - Mary, Bessy, Jane Wilson - without straining to make a point. Mrs. Tonna's approach is more directly didactic. She includes children among the gin-drinking factory hands, and implies that it is common for children to come home from work and find drunken parents fighting.

(3) Ignorance

The factory girl's ignorance of domestic management is one of the incidental ills of industrialization recorded by mid-nineteenth-century observers. Dodd draws attention to it in one of his letters to Lord Ashley:

...if we look at the females who have been brought up in the factories, and who, by some cause have been thrown out of employment; what, I would ask, is there left for them? To attempt to obtain employment as domestic servants is well known to be quite useless, as we do not find one person in five hundred willing to engage them in this capacity. The reason is obvious; for, in addition to their vulgar, ignorant, and uncouth behaviour, and want of recommendation or character, the long hours and unceasing toil of the factories have utterly incapacitated them for properly discharging the commonest duties of domestic servants. (2)

(1) Mary Barton, ch. x.

(2) Dodd, *opcit.*, pp. 104-105. In the story 'The Miner's Daughters' (Household Words, vol. I, March 30-September 29 1850), Jane feels that the farmer will not wish to marry her because she is a mill-girl. No explanation is given in the text: the author clearly expected his readers to understand the implications.

Mrs. Gaskell provides supporting evidence for this generalization in both Mary Barton and North and South. Mary Higgins is considered unsuitable for domestic work by her sister Bessy:

"Our Mary's a good wench: but who has she had to teach her what to do about a house? No mother, and me at the mill till I were good for nothing but scolding her for doing badly what I didn't know (1) how to do a bit."

Margaret does engage Mary as a servant; and the personal kindness meets with a generous response in that Mary refuses to accept payment for the work which she does. This relatively unobtrusive episode in North and South is interesting in two ways relevant to the present discussion. The relationship between Mary and her employers is based on personal loyalty, not economics, and reflects, on a small scale, the ideal industrial relationship worked out in the novel; and the fact that Mary gets employment modifies the pessimistic view of the factory girl's domestic incompetence shown by observers such as Dodd (though Margaret is offered as an exceptional person). In Mary Barton Mrs. Gaskell suggests that the factory-girl's tendency to domestic incompetence is not irrevocable. Jane Wilson, who speaks to Mary of her own early inadequacies as a housewife, has apparently learned to remedy them; and Mrs. Barton's neatly ordered house and generous hospitality indicates that she is a good manageress. Mrs. Tonna is more gloomy. Through her por-

(1) North and South, ch.xiii.

trayal of Mrs. Green's daughter, who, like Mrs. Barton, began life in the country, she suggests that neither cleanliness, nor order, nor comfort are to be found in the home of the woman factory-worker. What causes her the deepest unease is that Mrs. Wright is unaware of the slovenliness of her standards.

A more general and widespread dullness is attributed to the factory population by Mrs. Tonna when she records Richard Green's reactions to the sight of operatives at work:

Seen at their work, they are a community of automata. Nothing seems to animate them. The cold listlessness of their looks sends a chill to the heart of the spectator, who, if he feels rightly, must feel it a degradation to his species to be chained, as it were, to a parcel of senseless machinery, confused by its din and forced to obey its movements with scarcely an interval for thought or repose. (1)

This is an interesting observation, which raises a radical issue of the human problem created by a machine-dominated industry. However, it is not developed by Mrs. Tonna, who is preoccupied with the physical and moral damage sustained by the factory-worker. When Margaret Hale advises Higgins not to try to find work in the agricultural South, she describes the effects of the agricultural labourers work in terms very similar to those Mrs. Tonna uses of factory work:

The hard spadework robs their brain of life;
the sameness of their toil deadens their
imagination; they don't care to meet to talk

(1) Mrs. Tonna, op.cit., ch.xix.

over thoughts and speculations, even of the weakest, wildest kind, after their work is done; they go home brutishly tired, poor creatures! (1)
caring for nothing but food and rest.

By contrast, Mrs. Gaskell attributes to her factory population an alertness, a lively interest in affairs, and a capacity to articulate ideas in their own idiom, which seems to have more connection with their involvement in the busy world of trade than with formal education:

Their faces were not remarkable for beauty... The only thing to strike a passer-by was an acuteness and intelligence of countenance, which has often been noticed in a manufacturing (2) population.

Mrs. Barton, as a countrywoman, showed "somewhat the deficiency of sense in her countenance, which is likewise characteristic of the rural inhabitants in comparison with the natives of the manufacturing towns." (3) In the character of Job Legh Mrs. Gaskell shows more than mere alertness and intelligence: he has a deep intellectual curiosity and capacity. She claims that he is not a rare type of working man, although she acknowledges that many will not credit her claim. Such men, impelled by intellectual curiosity, not

(1) North and South, ch.xxxvii.

(2) Mary Barton, ch.i.

(3) Ibid., ch.i.
Disraeli's portrayal of Dandy Mick, Devilsdust and the three factory-girls support Mrs. Gaskell's contention that the factory population has a lively interest in and awareness of the social relations within the working community. However, Disraeli's is a less convincing treatment because he does not use the idiom of working-class speech in his recording of conversations, and his young factory-workers sometimes sound like mouthpieces for the information which Disraeli wishes to communicate to his readers.

by worldly ambition, remain unobtrusively in the class of their origins.

Mathematical problems are received with interest and studied with absorbing attention by many a (1) broad-spoken, common-looking, factory hand.

Although the novelists discussed above share pre-occupations and attitudes, there are clear-cut differences between them. Mrs. Tonna's impression of factory work is the bleakest. She bases her case on the physically debilitating and demoralizing effects of the factory-system, and, to make her point with logical consistency, is not afraid of making the characters repel sympathy. Mrs. Gaskell implies some of the unpleasant aspects of Mrs. Tonna's picture, but she selects as her central characters factory-workers with more intelligence and moral sensitivity than those who fill Mrs. Tonna's novel. Of the two conceptions, Mrs. Tonna's is the less life-like because the more obviously contrived to illustrate a thesis. Harriet Martineau is closer to Mrs. Gaskell in that she perceives qualities of intelligence and sensitivity in the workers. She individualizes a greater variety of types than Dickens in Hard Times: Stephen Blackpool cannot be said to typify the Coketown "hands" since he disagrees with his fellow workers on an important matter of principle and is ostracized for doing so.

(1) Mary Barton, ch.v.

(ii) Labour Relations

In this section I shall examine first the relationship between factory-owners and employees in Helen Fleetwood and Michael Armstrong, which do not accord a rôle to trade unionism. I shall then look at the treatment of trade unionism in four of the novels already discussed, Mary Barton and North and South, 'A Manchester Strike' and Hard Times; in addition, I shall consider Charles Reade's Put Yourself in His Place (1870) and Miss Grace of All Souls,⁽¹⁾ which are at opposite poles from each other and have little in common with the mid-nineteenth-century group.⁽¹⁾

(a) Helen Fleetwood

Mrs. Tonna sees the factory system itself as the secondary cause of the physical and moral ills she portrays, and the natural human tendency to evil as the root cause:

On the system, the vile, the cruel, the body- and soul-murdering system of factory labour, we cannot charge the innate depravity of the human heart; but we do denounce it as being in itself a foul fruit of that depravity under its hateful forms of covetousness, and of being in turn the prolific root of every ill that can inhumanize man, and render an enlightened and Christian country the mark of God's most just and holy indignation, provoking him even to blot its place and name from among the nations of the earth. (2)

Rural life is preferable because the relationship between the squire and the dependent villagers is more personal than that

(1) I shall refer to Disraeli's Sybil in the course of my discussion of Mrs. Gaskell's two novels.

(2) Mrs. Tonna, op.cit., ch.x.

between the millowner and his employees. The factory-workers suffer injury and deformity because the employer exploits their labour for his profit; they become depraved because he takes no interest in their spiritual well-being. Mrs. Tonna's conception of rural life is more acceptable as a literary device than as a reflection of the type of existence led by most rural labourers: the "Captain Swing" disturbances indicate the existence of serious discontent among them.⁽¹⁾ But she implies that abandonment of the factory-system would not be to the country's detriment and she offers little hope of improvement. Socialism is anathema:

Beyond this it was impossible to go — Socialism is the ne plus ultra of six thousand years' laborious experience on the part of the great enemy of man — it is the moral Gorgon upon which whomsoever can be compelled to look must wither (2) away.

The only reference to concerted movement by the workers is put in the form of a veiled, sinister threat by South in a conversation with Richard Green:

"...we are looking beyond the point they marked out, and may shew them yet that we are not to be bamboozled with fine names when we want the things (3) themselves that those names signify."

Reformist legislation has had little effect in curbing the iniquities of exploitation by factory-owners. Its pro-

-
- (1) See E.J. Hobsbawn and George Rudé, Captain Swing (London, 1969).
See also the description of Marney in Sybil, book II, ch.iii.
- (2) Mrs. Tonna, op.cit., ch.xx.
- (3) Ibid., ch.xvi.

visions are timid and easily evaded, according to the comments of Mrs. Wright's neighbours. Legislation is not, therefore, put forward as an effective means of alleviating evils. There is a glimmer of something more positive in the characterization of the manufacturer, Mr. H., who subscribes to one of the main tenets of orthodox Political Economy:

The great point of difference between Mr. H. and the generality of his manufacturing friends consisted in this; that whereas they considered the personal interests of master and labourer to be things not only irreconcilable, but diametrically opposed one to another, he regarded them as identical. (1)

However, Mrs. Tonna sees little hope of the realization of harmony in industrial relations: Mr. H. is in the minority, and the immediate prospect is increasing class hostility:

Two classes, hitherto bound together by mutual interests and mutual respect, are daily becoming more opposed the one to the other. (2)

(b) Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy

Although Mrs. Trollope sees the physical condition of the rural labourer as superior to that of the factory-worker, she does not go as far as Mrs. Tonna in regretting that industrialization came to transform the country's economy and way of life. However, as Mr. Bell points out to Mary Brotherton, strict controls are necessary:

(1) Ibid., ch.xx.

(2) Ibid.

"It is not from increased, or increasing science that we have any thing to dread, it is only from a fearfully culpable neglect of the moral power that should rule and regulate its uses, that it can be other than one of God's best gifts." (1)

The "culpable neglect of the moral power" is illustrated by the behaviour of those who have vested interests in exploiting workers — factory-owners such as Sharpton and Sir Matthew Dowling, and Poor Law officials who are anxious to rid themselves of burdens upon the parish rates. (2) Unfortunately Mrs. Trollope vitiates her case by making Sir Matthew such a grotesque figure. He does not typify the body of factory-owners because his behaviour is sadistic: it does not arise naturally from the pressure of his social rôle. Bounderby in Hard Times is larger-than-life but his character is the "distilled essence" of weaknesses common among men of his class. (3) His weaknesses arise from his succumbing to the temptations inherent in his position:— easy living, materialism, enjoyment of power, self-importance, complacency, prejudiced fear of the workers.

(1) Mrs. Trollope, op.cit., ch.xix.

(2) Mrs. Tonna predicated the existence of unholy alliances between Poor Law officials and factory-owners. Mr. Z, the millowner, works in collusion with an official in Mrs. Green's country parish, to lure the unsuspecting family into the town.

(3) In Unto This Last (1862) Ruskin writes in a footnote: The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens's caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. (Ruskin, Unto This Last, Library edition, vol. XVII, London, 1905, p. 31.)

The necessary controls would be brought about by means of reforming legislation. The most concentrated expression of her belief in the value of laws which weaken the power of laissez-faire is the conversation between Mr. Bell and Mary Brotherton in which the enlightened clergyman advocates a Ten Hours Bill. He claims that many advantages would stem from it: the operatives would enjoy better health; children would not be too tired to profit from teaching; parents would not be hardened by the fear of becoming destitute if they did not goad their children to work excessively hard; and there would be less likelihood of cyclic work, whereby operatives were pushed beyond acceptable limits at one time and under- or unemployed at another.

The novel ends on a note of escapist fantasy, and there is no evidence that Mrs. Trollope gave much thought to the power of organized labour. When Michael Armstrong appeared in book form a preface recorded a change in her plans for writing a sequel, resulting from her dislike of the courses adopted by others engaged in a similar struggle:

...it is grievous to see misguided and unfortunate men pursuing a course which must necessarily neutralize the efforts of their true friends. When those in whose behalf she hoped to move the sympathy of their country are found busy in scenes of outrage and lawless violence, and uniting themselves with individuals whose doctrines are subversive of every species of social order, the author feels that it would be alike acting in violation of her own principles, and doing injury to the cause she wishes to serve, were she to persist in an attempt to hold up as objects of public sympathy, men who have stained their righteous cause with deeds of violence and blood. (1)

(1) Ibid., preface to first edition in book form, 1840.

(c) 'A Manchester Strike'

The line of argument in Harriet Martineau's story follows the principles of orthodox Political Economy. The establishment of a rate of wages is a matter of arrangement between an individual master and his workpeople, not a matter of legislative interference: because the masters have varying amounts of capital available, wages differ from one factory to another. In the story this is used to justify differences in the wages paid by the four employers. There is a fixed amount available for wages; so an increase in the number of workers results in a reduction in wages paid to the individual employee. It is argued that workers can control the size of the labour market by marrying later and having smaller families. The young factory-workers who marry as soon as the strike begins are therefore contributing to their own undoing:

...amid the warning looks of elderly friends, and the remonstrances of parents who justly thought this the worst possible time to take new burdens upon them, several thoughtless young couples went laughing through the rain to the altar, and snapped their fingers at the clergyman behind his back because his careful enquiries brought to light no cause why the solemnization of matrimony should not proceed. (1)

Moreover, according to the argument attributed to Wentworth, strikes are futile because they waste the fund from which wages are paid:

(1) Harriet Martineau, 'A Manchester Strike', ch.vi., Illustrations of Political Economy (London, 1832-34).

"You know that much of our capital, which ought by this time to be returning to us again, has been for many weeks locked up in our stocks of raw material. You know that the expense of keeping on our establishments has not been repaid by the production of goods for the market; or the cost of maintaining ourselves and our families, by the profitable employment of our time and our wits. We have been consuming idly, and so have you; and thus there must needs have been great waste. — And what is it which has been thus wasted? The fund which is to maintain you; the fund out of which your wages are paid. (1)

The strike does fail, and the way forward, as Harriet Martineau sees it, is through recognition by both masters and men that their interests are identical, not opposed.

This outline does not do justice to the persuasiveness of Harriett Martineau's presentation of the principles of Political Economy. Although she is opposed to the strike, and her spokesman in the story is Wentworth, one of the employers, she does not vindicate the attitudes of all the employers; nor does she make them likable as a group: Elliott is arrogant, Mortimer unsympathetic, and Rowe weak. There is no narrow stereotyping of the strikers: Clack, as his name suggests, is unsubtle and indiscreet, but Allen is sensitive and moderate, the type of unionist who offered Harriet Martineau hope that harmony in industrial relations was possible. However, the union as a body does not inspire her confidence because it is fickle in its support of Allen, and contains too many irresponsible and hot-headed men.

(1) Ibid., ch.ix.

Nevertheless, she does not present union power as a threat: there is little sense of national union solidarity when funds run short and the London advisers suggest the Manchester men come to terms with their employers.

(d) Mary Barton and North and South

Although in Mary Barton Mrs. Gaskell shows sympathy for the suffering workers in the Manchester cotton mills in the period between 1839 and 1842, she betrays a fascinated horror of the lengths of violence to which trade unionists might go, and unwaveringly condemns such behaviour as not merely anti-social but also sinful. Significantly, the novel's resolution of the conflicts which it describes does not involve trade unions as organizations, but factory workers as individuals.

After attributing to John Barton an extreme opinion about inequalities of wealth, Mrs. Gaskell comments:

I know that this is not really the case; and I know what is the truth in such matters: but what I wish to impress is what the workman feels (1) and thinks.

She particularizes several situations which arouse understandable bitterness among working men. There appears to be an unfair discrepancy between the workers' descent into destitution and their masters' continuing comfort: this is exemplified by the juxtaposition of the distress of the Davenports in their cellar-dwelling and the leisured and

(1) Mary Barton, ch.iii.

elegant style of life enjoyed by the Carsons after the conflagration in their mill. A second cause of bitterness arises from the masters' failure to impress upon the men that the interests of employers and employees were identical and that both economic classes were vulnerable during a trade recession:

So class distrusted class, and their want of mutual confidence wrought sorrow to both. The masters would not be bullied, and compelled to reveal why they felt it wisest and best to offer only such low wages; they would not be made to tell that they were even sacrificing capital to obtain a decisive victory over the continental manufacturers. And the workmen sat silent and stern with folded hands refusing to work for such pay. There was a strike in (1) Manchester.

In the description of the meeting between the employers and a delegation of workmen, Mrs. Gaskell shows in operation what amounts to a combination of masters each of whom has as much power as a combination of all the workers within his own factory. Although she does not comment on this implication of the scene, she does admit that the workmen are subjected to strong provocation when Harry Carson amuses himself by drawing mocking caricatures of the delegates. She clearly attributes some responsibility for trade-union violence to middle-class provocation or neglect, and, in an authorial comment, expresses a sense of class guilt:

The people rise up to life; they irritate us, they terrify us, and we become their enemies. Then, in the sorrowful moment of our triumphant power, their eyes gaze on us with a mute reproach.

(1) Ibid., ch.xv.

Why have we made them what they are; a powerful monster, yet without the inner means for peace and happiness? (1)

Mrs. Gaskell strives to do justice to the fine qualities of individual trade unionists such as John Barton, with his "rough Lancashire eloquence". (2) By contrast the demagogue from London who attempts to foster the men's sense of dissatisfaction looks less reliable:

He looked so self-conscious, so far from earnest, among the group of eager, fierce, absorbed men, among whom he now stood. He might have been a disgraced medical student of the Bob Sawyer class, or an unsuccessful actor, or a flashy shopman. The impression he would have given you would have been unfavourable, and yet there was much about him that could only be characterised as doubtful. (3)

The introduction of such a leader creates an unfavourable impression of the trade union movement. However, Mrs. Gaskell does not seem to be displaying ungrounded prejudice here: Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in their history of the trade union movement, attest to the existence of this type of leader in the 1840s, when they point out that between about 1843 and 1860 there was a shifting of leadership in the trade union world from the casual enthusiast and irresponsible agitator to a class of salaried officers chosen from the rank and file for their superior business capacity. (4)

(1) Ibid., ch.xv.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., ch.xvi.

(4) Sidney and Beatrice Webb, The History of Trade Unionism (London, 1894), p. 186 (second edition, 1902).

In spite of these qualifications, the trade unionists' use of violence against masters and "knobsticks" dominates the novel, chiefly by virtue of its power to create exciting narrative effects. Mrs. Gaskell was not showing unwarranted hostility to the unions by representing unionists as the perpetrators of Harry Carson's murder. She based her story on an actual situation, as she explained in a letter to Sir John Potter.⁽¹⁾ She apologizes for any pain caused to Sir John's family by her account of Harry Carson's death, the circumstances of which were similar to that of one of Potter's relatives, who was murdered after a dispute with a trade union. She claimed to be unaware of the details, pointing out that there were similar cases in Glasgow at the time of the cotton spinners' strike.⁽²⁾ However, because of the sensational nature of the situation and its position as the node of the plot, the portrayal of trade unionism is strongly coloured by associations with class violence. In any book dealing with social relations the behaviour of members of a group assumes a representative quality. The maiming of "knobsticks" when workmen on strike throw vitriol into their faces is perhaps more representative of trade union violence, although it plays a subordinate rôle in the novel.

(1) Mrs. Gaskell's Letters, letter 130 (16 August 1852), pp. 195-6.

(2) According to the Webbs (op.cit., p. 154), twenty years before 1838 the Cotton Spinners' Union in Glasgow had started a "reign of terror", and some of its members were charged with conspiracy to murder.

Mrs. Gaskell's choice of words and the rhythmical patterns of her writing in some passages referring to the meetings of trade unionists represent another element in her attitude which must be set against her conscious attempts to understand the working men and her achievement of instinctive sympathy. It is significant that her writing sometimes evokes a body of contemporary references to the secretiveness and solemnity of dubious trade union gatherings, often having a strong ritualistic component. The air of illegal conspiracy about the trade unionists' meetings is twice referred to by Mrs. Gaskell in language which is self-conscious and melodramatic in its scene-setting "properties":

Strange faces of pale men, with dark glaring eyes, peered into the inner darkness, and seemed desirous to ascertain if her [Mary's] father were at home...

They were all desperate members of Trades' Unions, ready for anything; made ready by want. (1)

There is added pungency in the awesome swearing of an oath in Mrs. Gaskell's account of the conclusion of the meeting of operatives which follows the conference between some of their members and the masters:

Then came one of those fierce terrible oaths which bind members of Trades' Unions to any given purpose. Then, under the flaring gaslight, they (2) met together to consult further.

The use of the phrase "fierce and terrible", the emotive

(1) Mary Barton, ch.x.

(2) Ibid., ch.xvi.

appeal of the word "flaring", with its suggestion of a wild, unsteady movement, and the nocturnal setting and lurid lighting are the stock in trade of sensational writing. It seems reasonable to infer from Mrs. Gaskell's use of such clichés here that she is appealing to established responses in her readers; and there are several contemporary references to secrecy, sinister rituals and the swearing of oaths resulting in the perpetration of illegal and often violent actions.

The Annual Register for 1838 contains the following passage on a trade union:

The most profound secrecy attends the operation of the association, and their measures are so well concerted, that it is alike impossible to arrest their execution beforehand, or to identify the parties, after an outrage has been committed. (1)

It continues with a hostile account of an initiation ceremony:

Like all secret associations, they begin by the institution of certain mystic and superstitious rites, which not only impose upon the imagination of their neophytes, but give a dramatic interest to their proceedings and a dignity to their lawless schemes. Thus it appears, that the apartments in which their nocturnal conclaves assemble, are often, on occasions of especial solemnity, decorated with battle-axes, drawn swords, skeletons, and other insignia of terror. The ceremony of initiation itself, is said to partake of a religious character. The officials of the society are ranged on either

(1) Annual Register (1838). pp. 204-5.

side of the room, in white surplices; on the table is the open Bible. The novice is introduced with his eyes bandaged — prayers and hymns are recited — and certain mystic rhymes pronounced; after which an oath is administered, of which the imprecatory form, may be easily conceived, and the new member, his eyes being bandaged, is let out. (1)

Disraeli's account of Dandy Mick's initiation into a trade union follows this pattern and incorporates an oath like that which the Glasgow cotton spinners were accused of using. It makes even more unequivocal than Mrs. Gaskell's phrase "to any given purpose" the violent actions to which trade unionists were thought to have committed themselves:

"Michael Radley," said the President. "Do you voluntarily swear in the presence of Almighty God and before these witnesses, that you will execute with zeal and alacrity, as far as in you lies, every task and injunction that the majority of your brethren, testified by the mandate of this grand committee, shall impose upon you, in furtherance of our common welfare, of which they are the sole judges; such as the chastisement of Nobs, the assassination of oppressive and tyrannical masters, or the demolition of all mills, works and shops that shall be deemed by us incorrigible? Do you swear this in the presence of Almighty God, and before these witnesses?" (2)

Mrs. Gaskell's use of the word "those" in the phrase "one of those fierce terrible oaths" implies that she expects her readers to know something about them; passages such as Disraeli's and those to be found in the Annual Register seem to support this theory.

(1) Ibid. See also E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, (New York, 1963), pp. 509-515 (Penguin edition); and Cole and Filson, British Working Class Movements, Select Documents, 1789-1975, pp. 277-281. The editors point out that this account of the initiation ceremony of the Woolcombers' Union is taken from a hostile source, the anti-trade-union pamphlet by E.C. Tufnell, The Character, Objects, and Effects of Trades' Unions, 1834.

(2) Disraeli, Sybil (London, 1845), book IV, ch.iv.

The relationship between master and man is harmoniously resolved by Carson's extending to Barton the forgiveness which he had at first withheld. The softening of Carson's attitude to his workmen as a body is therefore the outcome of the train of contacts which follows a bizarre incident. The contacts include Job Legh who has remained apart from the trade unionists; the union therefore fades in significance towards the end of the novel and does not seem to offer Mrs. Gaskell any hope that it might be a means of drawing the classes together in an effort to avoid future misunderstandings in industrial relations. In her later novel about northern industrial life, North and South, Mrs. Gaskell again stresses the importance of personal contact between individuals as a means of mitigating the bitterness between employers and employees. Although her dramatized discussion of the nature and importance of trade unions marks a refinement on her treatment of the subject in Mary Barton, there is no suggestion in the novel that Mrs. Gaskell was willing to attach any more importance to their potential role.

The bogey of trade union conspiracy leading to planned acts of violence is laid in North and South. A clear indication of this is an honest but amicable discussion between Margaret Hale, her father and Nicholas Higgins about the need for a trade union organisation. Nicholas claims that it is necessary for men to combine in order to defend themselves against exploitation:

"A man leads a dree life who's not i' th' Union. But once i' th' Union, his interests are taken care on better nor he could do it for himsel', or by himsel', for that matter. It's the only way working men can get their rights, by all joining together. More the members, more chance for each one separate man having justice done him. Government takes care o' fools and madmen; and if any man is inclined to do himsel' or his neighbour a hurt, it puts a bit of a check⁽¹⁾ on him, whether he likes it or no."

The respectful hearing given by Margaret and Mr. Hale indicates that this is to be taken as a responsibly thought-out attitude. Mrs. Gaskell exposes a weakness in the attitudes of millowners, including Thornton, to their workpeople: they fail to see the need to explain their reasons for retrenching, possibly by means of wage-reductions, and therefore arrogate to themselves privileges which automatically de-humanize their relationships with their workpeople. The employers' attitudes provide evidence for Carlyle's claim:

We have profoundly forgotten everywhere that Cash-payment is not the sole relation of human beings. ⁽²⁾

However, these are not the terms in which the trade unionists identify their wrongs; and neither in the discussion between Higgins, Hale and Margaret, nor in the scheme of values embodied in the novel as a whole is the trade union cause entirely vindicated.

In the presentation of John Thornton and his fellow millowners there is no suggestion that the work people are

(1) North and South, ch.xxxvi.

(2) Carlyle, Past and Present (Boston, 1843), London, 1845), book III, ch.i., p. 146, (Centenary edition, vol. X).

subjected to serious exploitation; and Mr. Hale invokes the tenets of Political Economy to point out that strikes are futile because wages find their own level, so that the most successful strike can force them up for only a moment, after which they may sink in far greater proportion. A more direct and seriously adverse reflection on trade union activity is Margaret's accusation that unions are as tyrannical as the masters of whose tyranny they complain, a charge which Nicholas fails to answer satisfactorily. He is evasive when Margaret asks how the unwilling member, John Boucher, came into the union:

"It's not for me to speak o' th' Union. What they does, they does. Them that is of a trade mun hang together; and if they're not willing to take their chance along wi' the rest, th' Union has ways and means." (1)

A subsequent remark makes it clear that ostracism was used as a means of persuading unwilling workmen to join the union. Nicholas's claim that it is necessary for men to join in order to make common cause against exploitation is countered by Margaret's reply, to the effect that it defeats its own object when men forced into the union turn against it and give it a bad name, as Boucher does when the striking workers march on Thornton's mill; and Boucher's suicide comes as the climax of the discussion with Nicholas, giving a sadly ironic twist to Margaret's heated argument:

"Higgins, I don't know you today. Don't you see how you've made Boucher what he is, by driving him into the Union against his will — without his heart going with it. You have made him what he is!" (2)

(1) North and South, ch.xxviii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxxvi.

Mrs. Gaskell's account of the riot outside Thornton's mill is interesting for its combination of two apparently contradictory strands. Her description of the approach of Thornton's workmen is couched in terms which reflect and would tend to reinforce fears of the power of a mob. The men are compared to wild animals, maddened with hunger and intent on tracking down their prey, in an extended passage which includes the phrases "the fierce growl of deep angry voices", "a ferocious murmur of satisfaction", "the demoniac desire of some terrible wild beast for the food that is withheld from his ravening", "the savage satisfaction of the rolling angry murmur", "gaunt as wolves, and mad for prey".⁽¹⁾ The corollary of her treatment of the workmen in this scene is her presentation of Thornton in the rôle of hero:

...the people were raging worse than ever. He stood with his arms folded; still as a statue; his face pale with repressed excitement. ⁽²⁾

The apparently contradictory thread in the episode of the march on Thornton's mill is the manifestation by the crowd of a chivalrous instinct towards Margaret, whose intervention helps to save Mr. Thornton from further attacks on his person. The sudden capitulation to restrained behaviour is incompatible with the implications of the earlier description, that crowd behaviour, especially by groups of workers, always tends to the irrational and the violent. However, it is more in keeping with Mrs. Gaskell's portrayal of working men in

(1) Ibid., ch.xxii.

(2) Ibid.

the novel as a whole: the images of ferocity and ruthlessness have a curiously isolated quality. Mrs. Gaskell does not see an inevitable connection between trade unionism and violence. The violence which breaks out during the march on Thornton's mill is counter to union policy, although it is the union's coercive tactics which draw into its ranks men such as Boucher who have scant regard for official policy.

Before resolving the issues raised during her consideration of industrial relations, Mrs. Gaskell establishes a delicate balance of forces. The millowners' attitudes to their workmen are, in the light of Mrs. Gaskell's values, too impersonal, but there is admiration for the enterprise and courage of the strong proprietorial figure; trade unions are misguided in their belief that a strike can effectively achieve their ends and unethical in their tyranny over workers; but they do not always seek to make their claims by violent means and even the more desperate and wayward among their members have innately good instincts ultimately stronger than their violent ones. Upon the basis of these assumptions Mrs. Gaskell constructs what she considers to be a realisable ideal of industrial relations. She expresses a conviction that, if men regard one another as individuals, much of the acrimony between master and man will be dispelled — as happens with Thornton and Nicholas Higgins, of whom she is writing when she claims:

Once brought face to face, man to man, with an individual of the masses around him, and (take notice) out of the character of master and workman in the first instance, they had begun to recognise that "we have all of us one human heart". (1)

In effect, although Thornton and Higgins do come to know each other as individuals, they never step out of the rôles of master and man; rather, through her portrayal of their changed attitudes, Mrs. Gaskell advocates transferring to urban-industrial life some aspects of social relations existing in rural life. One of the essential features of life in such a community is that the man in authority recognizes his responsibility to individuals lower in the social scale than himself. This occurs in North and South when John Thornton gives Nicholas a hearing as a "knobstick" looking for work and when his newly awakened sympathy extends to other workmen: he considers providing meals for them and avoids offending their feeling of independence in his dealings with them about the innovation. On their part Higgins and a fellow-workman show the personal loyalty usually associated with the faithful servant when they stay behind after working hours to complete a task, knowing that their master is worried about the poor state of trade. However, there are important differences between this situation in Milton-Northern and that within the village community: no charity is given by the industrial master to those dependent on him; and John

(1) Ibid., ch.1.

Thornton does not correspond to the squire in that he has risen from a humbler station in life by his own efforts. However, three features of the traditional rural relationship are present in Mrs. Gaskell's picture at the end of North and South. Firstly, the hierarchy of master and man is accepted by the subordinate; secondly, the master shows a sense of responsibility for his men, and takes a personal interest in them; and thirdly, they respond by demonstrating their loyalty to him.

The development in industrial relations which takes place in North and South is not presented as a panacea, merely as a means by which the acrimony of Capital-Labour disputes might be lessened. The situation in the novel involves some special pleading in that the two central characters in the industrial theme are both responsive to the softening influence of Margaret Hale. Mrs. Gaskell also accepts unquestioningly Hale's assertion that the interests of manufacturer and employee are identical and that strikes are futile in the light of the wages fund theory. She does not accord the trade unions as mass organizations a significant rôle in the future pattern of industrial relations, but she does recognize their psychological importance in that they help to combat the worker's sense of powerlessness.

(e) Hard Times

In Hard Times Dickens' treatment of trade unionism is unflattering and in some respects unconvincing. Reference to two articles by Dickens in Household Words, 'On Strike'

(11 February 1854) and 'Railway Strikes' (11 January 1851) help to provide a fuller picture of his attitude to industrial relations.

Like Mrs. Gaskell, Dickens sees the trade union organization as one comprising a body of well-meaning workers influenced by dishonest demagogues. Dickens' portrayal of the blusterer Slackbrider is based on the character of Mortimer Grimshaw, whom he had seen at a meeting of strikers in Preston.⁽¹⁾ In his article 'On Strike', Dickens shows Grimshaw (whom he designates Gruffshaw) to have little influence:

Then, in hot blood, up starts Gruffshaw (professional speaker) who is somehow responsible for this bill. O my friends, but explanation is required here! O my friends, but it is fit and right that you should have the dark ways of the real traducers and apostates, and the real un-English stabbers, laid before you. My friends when this dark conspiracy first began - But here the persuasive right hand of the chairman falls gently on Gruffshaw's shoulder. Gruffshaw stops in full boil. My friends, these are hard words of my friend Gruffshaw, and this is not the business - No more it is, and once again, sir, I the delegate, who said I would look after you, do move that you proceed to business! Preston has not the strong relish for personal altercation that Westminster hath. Motion seconded and carried, (2) business passed to, Gruffshaw dumb.

(1) The Preston cotton workers were on strike from September 1853 until April 1854. They wanted a ten per cent pay rise, but, when the operatives in selected mills had struck in accordance with the strike leaders' policy, the masters enforced a lock-out. For a discussion of the significance of this strike in the mid-century struggle between Capital and Labour, see Carnall's article 'Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike', Victorian Studies, September 1964, pp. 31-48.

(2) Dickens, 'On Strike', Household Words, VIII, (11 February 1854), p. 557.

In Hard Times Dickens does not provide a fictional equivalent of the more rational, highly-respected leader, George Cowell, of whom Geoffrey Carnall writes in his article 'Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike':

He and the rest of the delegates managed to sustain the morale of the men and women on strike through a whole winter, and kept up a vigorous resistance to the masters without any serious outbreaks of violence. (1)

Part of Dickens' case against trade unions is his fear that the union organization may bring pressure to bear on a man to suppress his individual opinions in order to present a united front. When Blackpool has been denounced as a traitor, Slackbridge appeals to the solidarity of the United Aggregate Tribunal, and Dickens comments caustically:

Slackbridge acted as fogleman, and gave the time. The multitude of doubtful faces (a little conscience-stricken) brightened at the sound, and took it up. Private feeling must yield to the common cause. (2)

By contrast, in 'Railway Strikes' (1851) Dickens writes respectfully of trade unionists' solidarity, referring to their "principle of honour". (3) The apparent discrepancy between the 1851 article and Hard Times may be accounted for by a difference in intention in the two works. Dickens is not merely expressing opinions about trade unionism in Hard Times: he is dealing with the subject in the context of his exploration of the antitheses Fact and Fancy, Art and Nature, and

(1) Carnall, op.cit., p. 37.

(2) Dickens, Hard Times (London, 1854), book II, ch.iv.

(3) Dickens, 'Railway Strikes', Household Words, vol. II, (11 January 1851), p. 362.

this colours his treatment. The novel as a whole asserts the importance of the cultivation of the imagination, not merely the intellect, and of the individual, not the mass, in which individuality is submerged:

So many hundred Hands in this Mill; so many hundred horse Steam Power. It is known, to the force of a single pound weight, what the engine will do; but, not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent, for the decomposition of virtue into vice, or the reverse, at any single moment in the soul of one of these its quiet servants, with the composed faces and the regulated actions. There is no mystery in it; there is an unfathomable mystery in the meanest of them, for ever. (1)

Dickens' unsympathetic attitude to trade unionism may also be attributable to the divergence between his analysis of the evils of the factory-system, and the terms used by unionism to define its grievances. The objectives of contemporary trade unions were very limited: according to the Webbs, between 1843 and 1860 unions concentrated on resisting particular sources of injustice, such as the law relating to master and servant, and piecework and systematic overtime. (2) The movement as Dickens represents it is lacking in perception and imagination. The body of workers is swayed by Slackbridge, and Slackbridge himself speaks in vague clichés and bombastic rhetoric:

"Oh my friends, the down-trodden operatives of Coketown! Oh my friends and fellow countrymen, the slaves of an iron-handed and a grinding

(1) Hard Times, book I, ch.xi.

(2) S. and B. Webb, op.cit., ch.iv.

despotism! Oh my friends and fellow-sufferers, and fellow-workmen, and fellow-men! I tell you that the hour is come, when we must rally round one another as One united power, and crumble into dust the oppressors that too long have battered upon the plunder of our families, upon the sweat of our brows, upon the labour of our hands, upon the strength of our sinews... (1)

It is difficult to know how far Dickens was prepared to concede to the individual working man perceptions which matched his own. Certainly Stephen Blackpool's remarks to Bounderby defining wrong approaches to the grievances of working people express in naïve terminology attitudes embodied in the novel as a whole:

The strong hand will never do't. Victory and triumph will never do't. Agreeing fur to mak one side unnat' rally awlus and for ever wrong, will never, never do't. Nor yet lettin alone will never do't...Most o' aw, ratin 'em as so much Power, and reg'latin 'em as if they was figures in a room, or machines...this will never do't, sir, till God's work is onmade. (2)

However, Dickens may not wish his readers to infer that a working-man as unexceptional as Blackpool has insights which elude organized groups of workmen. One aspect of his irony in Hard Times is his use of the humblest and most artless characters as vehicles for the communication of his attitudes: Sissy Jupe, for example, raises a shrewd objection to Political Economy. (3) This is a useful satirical device,

(1) Hard Times, book II, ch. iv.

(2) Ibid., book II, ch. v.

(3) See Hard Times, book I, ch. ix:

M^r Choakumchild reported that she had a very dense head for figures...that after eight weeks of induction into the elements of Political Economy, she had only yesterday been set right by a prattler three feet high, for returning to the question, "What is the first principle of this science?" the absurd answer, "To do unto others as I would that they should do unto me."

because it has the effect of making any character who does not see and respond to Dickens' perceptions seem inane. It is not therefore justifiable to conclude that Dickens wished us to see Stephen Blackpool's imaginative analysis of the position of working people as a comment on the wisdom of the working-man; rather, it may be a literary device.

A further explanation of Dickens' dismissal of trade unionism as an important and responsible force in industrial relations may be deduced from a vague statement made by Blackpool to Bounderby about responsibility for ameliorating the sorry state of industrial relations and the monotony and apparent pointlessness of the lives of factory hands:

"'Tis not me as should be looken to for that, sir. 'Tis them as is put ower me, and ower aw the rest of us. What do they tak upon themselves, sir, if not to do't?" (1)

In this context it is significant that Dickens dedicated his book to Carlyle: enlightened authority rather than democracy was Carlyle's nostrum, and through Blackpool's comment Dickens seems to be subscribing to Carlyle's ideal of industrial relations whereby the workers will give "noble loyalty in return for noble guidance." (2)

The effectiveness of Dickens' treatment of trade unionism is reduced by lack of clarity, both in explaining Blackpool's motives for not joining his fellow-workmen in

(1) Ibid., book II, ch.v.

(2) Carlyle, op.cit., p. 275.

the United Aggregate Tribunal, and in defining the situation against the background of which he makes his decision. The nature of "th' proposed reg'lations"⁽¹⁾ to which he does not subscribe is not made clear; nor is his reason for promising to Rachel that he will not belong to the union. Blackpool's decision is particularly difficult to understand because he tells Bounderby that the workers follow men like Slackbridge because they have genuine grievances. Moreover, he does not see Slackbridge as a sinister figure, even though he has enough influence to cause a body of well-meaning men to ostracize a solitary non-conformist. Confusion about the situation in which Blackpool decides to stand apart from his fellow workers may have arisen from Dickens' use of a strike in a real town, Preston, as the source of some details about trade unionism in a non-strike context in an imaginary place, Coketown.⁽²⁾ A passage in which Dickens refers to the Coketown workers' mistaken conception of the value of their concerted action occurs in his description of a meeting addressed by Slackbridge:

That every man felt his condition to be, somehow or other, worse than it might be; that every man considered it incumbent on him to join the rest, towards the making of it better; that every man felt his only hope to be in his allying himself to the comrades by whom he was surrounded; and that in this belief, right or wrong (unhappily wrong then), the whole of that crowd were gravely, deeply, faithfully in earnest; must have been as plain to anyone who chose to see what was there, as the bare beams of the roof, and the whitened brick walls. (3)

(1) Hard Times, book II, ch. iv.

(2) The location of the meeting in Hard Times, a "suffocatingly close hall" recalls the crowded cockpit to which Dickens devotes a paragraph in his article 'On Strike'.

(3) Ibid., ch. iv.

By using the word "then" in parenthesis Dickens suggests that the union meeting has a specific purpose, such as arriving at a decision about going on strike. In the article 'On Strike' he makes it clear that he regarded the men as unwise in calling a strike because it would widen the gulf between two groups of people whose interests were identical, employers and employees. It seems possible that Dickens has confused the factual raw material and the fictional artefact.

(f) Put Yourself in His Place

In the concluding paragraph of Put Yourself in His Place Reade claims to have written a roman à thèse:

...I have drawn my pen against cowardly assassination and sordid tyranny: I have taken a few undeniable truths, out of many, and have labored to make my readers realize those appalling facts of the day, which most men know, but not one in a thousand comprehends, and not one in a hundred thousand realizes, until fiction — which, whatever you may have been told to the contrary, is the highest, widest, noblest, and greatest of all the arts — comes to his aid, studies, penetrates, digests, the hard facts of chronicles and blue-books, and (1) makes their dry bones live.

Although he talks of "facts" and "undeniable truths" and claims to have an impeccable motive, the novel reads like a piece of anti-trade-union propaganda, informed by strong prejudices. As I hope to show, Reade remained faithful to his major source, Trades Unions Commission: Sheffield Out-

(1) Charles Reade, Put Yourself in His Place (London, 1869-70), Vol. II, ch.xi.

rages Enquiry (1867),⁽¹⁾ in his choice of situations, but tipped the scales against the trade unions mainly by his handling of the wider literary idiom of language and characterization with which the bare bones are clothed.

The Report and Minutes of Evidence on the Sheffield outrages reveal that, for at least ten years before the enquiry was instituted in 1867, some of the many trade unions connected with the Sheffield cutlery and tool-making industries had been trying to establish and maintain a "closed shop". Most of the attacks were directed against employers and small masters who offended the unions by employing many apprentices and flooding the labour market with them when their apprenticeships had been completed; by employing men from outside Sheffield in preference to local men, brought up in the Sheffield trade; and by using labour-saving machinery, thereby throwing men out of work. Sometimes workmen who refused to join unions or who, having joined, did not pay their contributions regularly, were punished. The unions also tried to control prices for work done, to ensure that each man had his just reward. The cross-examination of many witnesses in the 1867 enquiry revealed a host of threats and outrages against the property and

(1) Trades Unions' Commission: Sheffield Outrages Enquiry (London 1867): Adams and Dart Edition, published in 1971 for Social Documents Ltd. All quotations will be from this edition. The title will be abbreviated to "Report and Minutes of Evidence"

persons of those "wrong with the trade". (1)

Reade is faithful to the Report and Minutes of Evidence in showing workmen attacking only those "wrong with the trade", such as Henry Little and his employer, Mr. Cheetham. The threatening letters they receive in Reade's novel are similar in tone to the letters actually sent to employers, and the cryptic signatures - "Mary", "Balaam's Ass" and "Moonraker" - reflect the type of signature used in the letters quoted in evidence. A moderate one cited in the Report and Minutes of Evidence reads as follows:

Your bands will come back if you give up that lad, and if not you will not see them again. I thank you to know what we want without this trouble. We do not want to come again, if we do we shall not spare you as before. If you comply with this, come and show your face to a proper quarter. Signed by those who will come again if occasion requires, at a time, in such a way, as was as little expected as before. (2)

The tone of an anonymous letter to Mr. Cheetham is similar, if anything more polite:

MR. CHEETHAM, SIR, - I think you do very ill to annoy a many craftsmen for one. Remember, you have suffered loss and inconvenience whenever you have gone against Trades. We had to visit you last year, and when we came your bands went and

(1) One such person was Addis, a carving-tool manufacturer from London who had won a prize at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and was engaged by the Sheffield firm of Ward and Payne, edge-tool and sheep-shear manufacturers. Henry Little, Reade's protagonist, works in London until he is offered employment by a master-cutler from Hillsborough (the fictional equivalent of Sheffield), who sees a set of his skilfully-wrought carving tools in an exhibition.

(2) Report and Minutes of Evidence, p.129. q.6874.

your bellows gaped. We have no wish to come again this year, if you will be reasonable. But, sir, you must part with London hand, or take consequences.

"BALAAM"(1)

In showing both employers and "knobsticks" paying heavily either to win the goodwill of the unions, or to forestall further attacks, Reade uses situations reported in the Report and Minutes of Evidence. Little has to buy his acceptance with the Edge Tool Forgers' Union, offering to pay a premium of £15 to become a member, to contribute the weekly instalment and so abide by the Union's rules. Cheetham is the victim of blackmail by members of three unions who are opposed to his employing Henry Little. The grinders stop working for a week, and they ensure that Cheetham is the sufferer, as the foreman, Bayne, points out:

"Just look at the cleverness of it, sir. Here we are, wrong with the forgers and handlers. Yet they come into the works and take their day's wages. But they draw out the grinders, and mutilate the business. They hurt you as much as if they struck, and lost their wages. But no, they want their wages to help pay the grinders on strike. Your only chance was to discharge every man in the works, the moment the grinders gave notice. (2)

Although Cheetham claims that he is aptly nicknamed "Old Fightem" he submits to the unions' demands: that Henry Little should be discharged without the usual month's notice; that his rooms should be occupied by union men; that the

(1) Reade, op.cit., vol. I, ch.iii.

(2) Ibid., vol. I, ch.viii.

grinders should be paid for lost time; and that the unions be given £30 to cover the cost of staging a strike. The situation is, again, not Reade's invention. He was indebted to the words of David Ward, the manufacturer who employed Little's counterpart in reality. Ward describes a conversation with a trade union delegation which includes James Reaney, secretary of the Forger's Union:

4591 ...as my orders were all standing still I had no alternative but to consent to discharge the man, James Reaney informing me that that was the only means of the work being allowed to be recommenced. He thereupon stated that there was one other matter that required settling, namely, that I should pay 30/- expenses for the men being out of work for a week. Of course I protested against that.

4592. What did you say? - I protested against that line of conduct.

4593. Did you say you would pay it, or not? - (1) I protested against it, and paid the money.

Trade-union pressure against offenders was not confined to threats. It also involved the practice of rattening, the removal of a workman's or master's tools or part of his equipment as punishment for offending the unions. The victim was temporarily prevented from working, and he had to take steps to recover his property, which was usually restored to him peaceably. It seems to have been used most frequently against workers who did not maintain payment of their union contributions, but sometimes the employer's equipment was tampered with so that he would exert pressure

(1) Report and Minutes of Evidence, p. 89, qq. 4591-4593.

on the erring union members. Reade shows this form of coercion at work when Little, now an employer himself, loses two wheelbands because two of his men are behind with payment of their dues to the Saw Grinders' Union.

The most serious Sheffield outrages were the incidents in which attempts were made to injure men and their families, and people were killed or maimed. The Report and Minutes of Evidence refers to several instances of "doing" men. James Linley had kept a number of apprentices in defiance of the rules of the Saw Grinders' Union, and he was shot and slightly wounded by another workman at the instigation of Broadhead, the Saw Grinders' secretary. Joseph Helliwell was blown up and temporarily blinded by an explosion of gunpowder ignited by sparks from his glazier. A non-union fork-grinder was assaulted by union men and later severely burned when powder placed in his trough exploded. Reade has therefore ample backing in actuality for making Little the victim of serious outrages. When he is working for Cheetham someone mixes gunpowder with the fine cinders of his forge; and a more sinister assault is made on him in Cairnhope Church where, in a particularly far-fetched development of the plot, he retreats in the hope of plying his trade unmolested.

The source material of Reade's novel was in itself biased towards the concentrated exposure of trade union violence because the Commissioners' brief was to investigate the outrages. Reade's choice of such subject-matter suggests

that he was out of sympathy with the unions, since it would be difficult, though not impossible, to present them sympathetically in such a context. The Commissioners' Report puts the outrages in a perspective which is absent from Reade's book:

We believe that there are about 60 trades unions in Sheffield, of which 12 have promoted or encouraged outrages within the meaning of the Trades Union Commission Act, 1867.

We point to the year 1859 as the one in which outrage was most rife, and we notice with (1) pleasure that it has diminished since that time.

Moreover, Reade does not make the "dry bones live" in any way which modifies the adverse impression of the trade unions given by some of the evidence adduced.

One element in Mrs. Gaskell's sympathetic response to the workers, even when she does not subscribe to their social attitudes, is her readiness to take into account the workers' individual characters and personal lives, and to allow the most militant amongst them to put a case. Reade eschews this approach. The Sheffield workers are not shown in a family setting, or indeed in any relationships other than those with employers and fellow-workers, in situations where they are usually held to be in the wrong. When he does describe personal appearance or qualities of character, he writes in terms of groups and types rather than individuals, and often in language which suggests that he feels contempt and revulsion. When he describes the appearance

(1) Ibid., p.xvi.

of a "grinder of a certain low type", he writes:

This degenerate face was more canine than human; sharp as a hatchet, and with forehead villanously low; hardly any chin; and — most characteristic trait of all — the eyes, pale in color, and tiny in size, appeared to have come close together, to consult, and then to have run back into the very skull, to get away from the sparks, which their owner, and his sire, and his grandsire, had been (1) eternally creating.

Some of the details illustrate the de-humanizing effect of the grinders' work; but the use of words such as "canine", "low" and "degenerate" suggest moral revulsion. Reade represents the Hillsborough work people as coarse and stupid in an appendix which purports to be an objective report of the dangers of certain jobs in the cutlery and tool-making industries. Sometimes the attitude is one of open distaste:

They ought to leave off their insane habit of licking the thumb and finger of the left hand — which is the leaded hand — with their tongues. This beastly trick takes the poison direct to the stomach. They might surely leave it to get there through the pores; it is slow, but sure. I have also repeatedly seen a file-cutter eat his dinner with his filthy, poisoned fingers, and so send the poison home by way of salt to a fool's (2) bacon.

Sometimes there is a strong element of self-righteous moralizing in the comments:

They might drink less, and wash their bodies with a small part of the money so saved: the price of a gill of gin, and a hot bath are exactly the same... (3)

In their aggression the workers lack courage. When some members of the Brickmakers' Union take their revenge on

(1) Reade, op.cit., vol. I, ch.v.

(2) Ibid., vol. I, appendix.

(3) Ibid.

Bolt, Little's partner, for employing a firm which has mechanized the process of brickmaking, Bolt "hired more men, put up a notice he would shoot any intruder dead, and so frightened them by his blustering that they kept away, being cowards at bottom."⁽¹⁾ By contrast with the industrial workers, the country people, represented by Jael Dence and her family, are gentle and properly respectful to their superiors, such as Squire Raby. That Reade intended to draw a contrast between the two groups of workers, unflattering to the Hillsborough men, is clear from an entry in one of his notebooks:

write the rustic up and the
mechanic down
Physical and moral contrasts... (2)

There are some qualifications to this generally adverse picture of Sheffield workers. Not even the men labelled "scum" were entirely callous. When Henry Little is seen "hanging by the hand between two deaths", we are told that "every sentiment but humanity vanished from the raggedest bosom" and "the roughs seemed to be even more overcome than the others".⁽³⁾ After the unpleasant accident to Ned Simmons when he tries to hang a faulty wheel, Dan Tucker and Grotait have the sensitivity to abandon their plans to "do" Little. However, these qualifications are insignificant

(1) Ibid., ch.xxix.

(2) Quote by Wayne Burns in Charles Read: a Study in Victorian Authorship (New York, 1961), p. 274.

(3) Reade, op.cit., vol. I, ch.vi.

by comparison with the overall picture of the workmen and in the light of the partiality shown to Henry Little, who is, for most of the narrative, in conflict with the unions.

Although Little's experiences are similar to those of Addis, he is made into a younger and more glamorous character. Addis was thirty-seven when the Commissioners interviewed him, and he appears to have been of working-class origin; Little is in his twenties and is the son of Edith Raby, who belongs to a landowning family. His natural refinement of appearance and manner is noticed immediately by Jael Dence. In his evidence Addis tells of a rough encounter in a public-house with some of his fellow-workmen; Little is not a drinker. Reade's partiality emerges most clearly when Cheetham plans to use a Waterloo cracker to "deal" with any workman who tries to harm his new employees: he is not condemned by Reade, whereas the outrage perpetrated by the workers is described as "a horrible thing". Little at first objects to Cheetham's plan, but does not demur when Cheetham justifies his action on the grounds that the opponents use such tactics:

"Why, sir, you are planning the man's death!"

"And what is he planning? Light your forge, and leave the job to me. I'm Hillsborough too; and they've put my blood up at last."

While Henry lighted his forge, Mr. Cheetham whipped out a rule, and measured the window exactly. This done, he went down the stairs, and crossed the yard to go to his office.

But, before he could enter it, a horrible thing occurred in the room he had just left; so horrible, it made him, brave as he was, turn (1) and scream like a woman.

Reade's hostile attitude to trade unions may have been influenced by contemporary circumstances. Although the new model unions had been established (2) and trade unions still confined their membership to skilled workers, the Sheffield outrages and the enfranchisement of skilled workers in towns by the 1867 Reform Act may have stirred middle-class fears of the exercise of power by a large body of workers. However, Mrs. Gaskell found it possible to present with compassion, if not with approval, trade unionists who had recourse to violence. Any attempt to explain Reade's hostility must look outside the contemporary social and political situation. In his book Charles Reade: a Study in Victorian Authorship Wayne Burns quotes from Reade's note-books comments which suggest that Reade had an obsessive hatred of the "persecuting" unions. Beside every newspaper account of union activities which he pasted into his note-books after 1862 he wrote the words "dirty oligarchy"; and from the book which he names as Habits and Customs of the Working Classes (3) he took down the most adverse comments he could find:

(1) Ibid., vol. I, ch.v.

(2) The Associated Society of Engineers had, between 1852 and 1889, an elaborate constitution which served as a model for both old and new union organizations. There was a strong central organization and there were high dues from members.

(3) Presumably Wright's Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes.

Intelligent workmen exceptional. 9 out of 10.
 blackguards and blasphemous. p. 6.
 Want of courtesy. 7. Drunkenness outside
 their trade. Credulity about the bloated
 Aristocracy. 50 per cent read and write like
 children. 80 per cent know nothing of litera- (1)
 ture...

More significantly, he clearly sees the unions as persecutors, on a par with the "play-wright critics" against whom he struggled in his desire for recognition as a playwright. In Reade's own words, they formed themselves into a "little trades union" and "flew like hornets at every outsider who did not square them with champagne suppers or other douceurs, pecuniary bribes included..."(2)

Burns' suggestion that Reade had an obsessive dislike of trade unions because they offered a threat of violent anti-authoritarianism is borne out by the overall impression of Put Yourself in His Place.

(g) Miss Grace of All Souls'

Although Tirebuck's Miss Grace of All Souls' is set in the imaginary village of Beckerton-beyond-Brow, it deals with the effects on a small mining community of a historical situation, the miners' lock-out of 1893, when battle was

(1) Quoted in Burns, op.cit., p. 281.

(2) Ibid., p. 271.

joined between the coal-owners and the Miners' Federation.⁽¹⁾ Tirebuck claims that Beckerton is a paradigm of working-class communities engaged in the struggle between Capital and Labour. It is "an epitome of other Beckertons that were in the same struggle that labour was making to speak and make itself heard, to act and make itself felt".⁽²⁾ Tirebuck does not present the struggle from a Communist position: his ideal relationship between Capital and Labour is one in which both sides recognize that their interests are identical, but, without qualification, he presents the miners' cause as just and the coal-owners as selfish. His basic contention is that the coal-owners take too much of the profit for themselves, and engage in a style of living which is self-indulgent and difficult to change because so many aspects of their lives depend on the assumption of considerable wealth.

Tirebuck makes his polemic persuasive by taking as his working-class protagonists the Ockleshaw family, who are shrewd and careful with money. There is no suggestion in

-
- (1) In June 1893 the employers asked for a 25% reduction in wages and offered to submit their demand to arbitration. Most of the constituent branches rejected both arbitration and a reduction, and decided to counter the employers' demands with a notice for an equivalent advance for districts which had suffered reductions in wages during the previous two years. The Federation held out for the principle of a living wage, and the result was a lock-out lasting sixteen weeks, involving 300,000 miners, and marked by sporadic violence. The lock-out was brought to an end by Government intervention. The Federation had to concede a 10% reduction.
- (2) Tirebuck, Miss Grace of All Souls' (London, 1895), ch.xxiii.

the book that they are unusual in the working-class community; in fact Tirebuck claims that most poor families in Beckerton are having to struggle because of injustice, not because of their own fecklessness. Sam, the Ockleshaw who is a leading figure in the district branch of the Federation, is thoughtful and motivated by the worthy ambition of benefiting his own class:

If he were only a success — something worth having — on the board of Federation — on the County Council...ah, if he were a Labour candidate — a Labour M.P. — a worker, a doer, a practical reformer of the cruder members of his own kind. (1)

The miners out of work make a protest en masse, but any sinister power they might have is reduced by their weakness through hunger, a condition which, in Tirebuck's eyes, puts their riot beyond judgement:

...growling, groaning, hooting, booing, and both in sound and aspect more like the lean, lank, famished pale doubles of men who were too clemmed to come in person than the veritable men themselves, with their sunken eyes set in rings of purple, wild with want; and mouths the more cavernous for the sunken, shrunk cheeks, as they again huskily growled, hooted, and groaned, as if hunger, as such, had at last found shape and voice. (2)

Like the mob in North and South, the miners of Beckerton respond to the appeal of a woman, in this case Grace Waide, an idealized figure whose rôle as a spokeswoman on behalf of the miners is another means by which Tirebuck makes clear his partisanship.

(1) Ibid., ch.xxxv.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxiv.

Since the later part of the nineteenth century is slenderly represented in the preceding examination of the fictional treatment of labour relations, it is difficult to draw a general conclusion about development over a period. Reade in particular presents a highly personal and emotional picture. However, it may be worth isolating some of the most significant points to emerge and to relate one book to another where possible:

(i) Mrs. Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Tonna and Dickens based many of their attitudes on the belief that the interests of masters and workmen were identical, and that what harmed the masters' profits also had an adverse effect on wages. In the mid-nineteenth-century novels, it is the workmen who ignore this; in Tirebuck's novel the coal-owners are blamed for refusing to act upon it.

(ii) According to Mrs. Gaskell and Harriet Martineau, strikes are doomed to fail because they exhaust the wages fund.

(iii) Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens distinguish between the workers who form the rank and file of a trade union and the leaders who try to rouse them to militancy. In this way they reconcile their sympathy for the workers with their mistrust of the trade-union organization.

(iv) It is clear that mistrust of trade unionism is based partly on its tendency to suppress the individuality of the working-man: this emerges particularly clearly in North

and South and Hard Times. However, there is evidence in several novels of a fear of trade unionism as a lawless and violent force. In Sybil and, to a lesser extent, in Mary Barton the portrayal of trade unionism harks back to the secrecy of the trade unionists' activities before they were sanctioned by law. In Harriet Martineau's story and in Helen Fleetwood there is fear that union activities may lead to Socialism, a particularly horrifying prospect to Mrs. Tonna, despite the impassioned nature of her portrayal of the evil effects of industrialization.

(v) In Hard Times, Mary Barton, North and South and, much less obtrusively in Helen Fleetwood, hope for amelioration of industrial relations comes through personal contact between master and man.

(vi) The importance of unions as organizations with a crucial rôle to play in the future pattern of industrial relations is not fully realized.

WORKSHOP AND SWEATED TRADES

In this section I shall not attempt to generalize extensively since I shall be using fragmentary material which spans a long period. Details will be drawn from four mid-nineteenth-century novels and from three written in the later part of the century:- Sybil (1845), Mary Barton (1848), Alton Locke (1850), Ruth (1853), All Sorts and Conditions of Men (1882) and Children of Gibeon (1886), and Nebo the Nailer (1902). Of these Mrs. Gaskell's two novels will contribute

only a little to the discussion. I shall examine the novels in two groups according to subject rather than chronology. Alton Locke and the novels by Mrs. Gaskell and Besant deal with the experiences of tailors and seamstresses; and parts of Sybil and the whole of S. Baring Gould's Nebo the Nailer are concerned with two cottage industries of the Black Country, — lock- and nail-making.

(i) Tailors and Seamstresses

Comparison of treatment is difficult because the novels depict a variety of working conditions and types of sewing and tailoring work. I shall look at the range of situations chosen, the purposes for which details are selected, and fictional suggestions for mitigating the evils perceived in work-situations described.

In Alton Locke Kingsley considers the implications of the change from the "honourable" to the "show" trade. He does not polarize the discussion by exposing evils only in the sweated trade.⁽¹⁾ Working conditions are overcrowded and insanitary in the "honourable" workshop:

"Cellar workroom we calls Rheumatic Ward, because of the damp. Ground floor's Fever Ward — them as don't get typhus gets dysentery, and them as don't get dysentery gets typhus — your nose'd tell yer why if you opened the back windy. First

(1) In order to establish a show trade, Locke's new employer demolishes the old workrooms, replacing them with showrooms, and farms out work to people in their own homes.

floor's Ashmy Ward — don't you hear 'um now through the cracks in the boards, a puffing away like a nest of young locomotives? And this here most august and uppercrust cockloft (1) is the Conscrumptive Hospital."

Locke's feeling of revulsion from the scene is inspired largely by the unhealthy conditions. However, he also shrinks from the men themselves, some of whom have obviously been drinking and whose language Locke finds coarse:

I owe, too, an apology to my readers for introducing all this ribaldry. God knows, it is as little to my taste as it can be to theirs, (2) but the thing exists...

We have a sense of Kingsley's moralizing consciousness, which judges the men's conversation as ribald, and overlooks (in direct comment) the witty inventiveness of some of the remarks he attributes to them. Although Kingsley shows in Crossthwaite a man capable of rising above the demoralizing influence of his surroundings, he suggests that better working conditions may result in an improved standard of morality:

...the morals of the working tailors, as well as of other classes of artisans, are rapidly improving: a change which has been brought about partly from the wisdom and kindness of a few master tailors, who have built workshops fit for human beings, and have resolutely stood out against the iniquitous and destructive alterations in the system of employment. (3)

Kingsley's portrayal of a workshop in the honourable trade concentrates on the poor working conditions. The

(1) Kingsley, Alton Locke (London, 1850), ch.ii.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

change from honourable to show trade results in an intensification of this evil and the creation of others.

Kingsley uses the "den" of Jemmy Downes to exemplify the nature of the tailoring employees' work after the change.

Crossthwaite's remarks to his fellow-workers when they hear about the proposed change indicate that he sees in the new arrangements the future pattern of the trade.

That Kingsley's prediction was substantially accurate may be perceived from the evidence presented to a Select Committee of the House of Lords, which examined the sweated trades of the East End and reported in 1888 and 1890. One of the witnesses, Mr. Lewis Lyons, commented on Kingsley's powers of perception:

The Rev. Charles Kingsley was a better prophet than most people thought when he gave utterance to the opinion that large as the "sweater" and tailoring community generally was at that time, (1) they would enormously increase in future years.

It seems clear from a reading of the evidence that Kingsley also perceived the main sources of the increase in the number of sweaters. There was a strong Jewish influence in the sweated tailoring trade, but its initiation was not the sole responsibility of Jewish immigrants. Kingsley takes up both these points: Downes' partner is Jewish, but men such as the son of Locke's first employer, by changing the nature of their trade, provided opportunities for sweaters and middle-men to operate. Kingsley foresaw

(1) Parliamentary Papers, First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System (London, Edinburgh and Dublin, 1888), q. 1776.

an increase in the ranks of sweaters recruited from workmen who have some knowledge of the trade and who are attracted by the profits which they see sweaters making. Downes is such a workman:

"Look at Schechem Isaacs, that sold penknives in the street six months ago, now a-riding in his own carriage, all along of turning sweater. If God's curse is like that, I'll be happy to take any man's share of it." (1)

The evidence presented to the Select Committee suggests that another attraction of the position of sweater for working men was that it enabled them to regain some of the independence which they lost when they worked in dens themselves. Loss of independence is presented by Kingsley as one of the most disturbing aspects of the sweating systems. Downes and his partner are the kind of sweaters who are so extortionate that they demand money for board and lodging and pay infinitesimal wages so that the sweatees have to pawn their possessions and are sometimes unable to leave the building without borrowing the "relaver" or common coat. Mike Kelly, among others, is in this position:

"...they've pawned the relaver this fifteen weeks, and not a boy of us iver sot foot in the street since." (2)

Kingsley did not need to embellish his material on the sweating system in order to create a shocking impact; indeed, he might well have gone beyond the bounds of credi-

(1) Kingsley, op.cit., ch.x.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxi.

bility had he claimed more horrors for the system, thus reducing the novel's value in contributing to the dynamics of the formation of public opinion and the initiation of reformist activities.⁽¹⁾ However, he does use the rhetoric of imaginative literature to evoke sympathy for the sweaters' victims. His description of the overcrowded and insanitary working conditions in the sweaters' den is created from the cumulative effect of emotive adjectives:

As I had expected, a fetid, choking den, with just room enough in it for the seven or eight
sallow, starved beings, who, coatless, shoeless,
and ragged, sat stitching, each on his truckle bed.⁽²⁾

The evidence presented to the Select Committee includes the same impression of overcrowding and unwholesomeness, but is more matter-of-fact and explanatory, even in some of the more forceful passages:

Without exception, the dens of the sweaters are the most filthy, poisonous, soul-and-body killing places imaginable. I know in many cases that persons become consumptive...on account of the
insufficient oxygen breathed by the workers.⁽³⁾

The scene of the visit to the sweaters' den owes some of its effects to the theatre: it is not only highly visual but also full of movement, some of which is controlled farce. Although Farmer Porter presents a ludicrous figure when he attacks Downes for ill-treating his son, his outraged feelings provide one of the channels through which Kingsley communicates his own sense of moral shock to the readers.

(1) See prefaces to Alton Locke written in 1856 and 1862.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxi.

(3) Select Committee First Report, q. 1787.

The third type of sewing work which appears in Kingsley's novel is the sweated labour of seamstresses working in their own homes. The three girl seamstresses are employed in a branch of the clothes trade which was a known source of injustice before sweaters' dens proliferated in the East End.⁽¹⁾ They are in the fashion tailoring business, making clothes in their own homes for the rich. It is a particularly striking illustration of the Dives-Lazarus contrast. Kingsley makes his appeal to the public conscience, particularly the conscience of the rich, through concern for the moral welfare of the individual. Lizzie and her friend, not hardened prostitutes, could be rescued:

"Oh! if that fine lady, as we're making that riding-habit for, would just spare only half the money that goes to dressing her up to ride in the park, to send us out to the colonies, (2) wouldn't I be an honest girl there?"

This is a challenge to the wealthy woman who used the services of seamstresses and to a society which allowed such exploitation and discountenanced prostitutes as a shame to their sex. The failure of the community as a whole and, most reprehensibly, of the women within it to help seamstresses who work at home is one of Besant's cries in his study of the characters and lives of seamstresses, Children of Gibeon:

(1) Wanda Neff claims that dressmakers working long hours for poor pay began to attract public notice in the early 1830s. (Neff, op.cit., pp. 122-124 and pp. 129-135). In 1843 the Association for the Aid and Benefit of Dressmakers and Milliners was formed. Robert Tressell's The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (1914) draws attention to the continued existence of this type of sweated labour. See chs.xx and xxxiii.

(2) Kingsley, op.cit., ch.viii.

...she may rely upon getting no help from anybody
 ...none — alas! — from ladies, because their
 injustice is too old and stale,...and because of
 that strange hardness of woman's heart towards
 women, which is a wonderful and a monstrous thing.⁽¹⁾

Through the character of Lizzie Besant hints at the vulnerability of the work-girl to potential seducers, but he does not, as Kingsley does, make her desperate need of the means of survival a powerful force in her life: she has pretensions to gentility and longs for a glamorous existence.

Both Kingsley and Besant see the prevailing spirit of competition as the underlying cause of the hardships of the seamstresses. Besant comments on Melenda's difficulty in understanding any other principle of organization:

The Doctrine of Co-operation was difficult for Melenda to grasp. She only understood, of work, that it must be "given out" in the usual manner and by the customary machinery of clerks...

Melenda, therefore, could not at first understand how the Golden Age may be restored. Few, indeed, are those whose imaginations can overstep the bounds of custom and sally forth into the world where women are actually paid for labour, at a price which is not ruled by competition. ⁽²⁾

When Kingsley refers to the change from the honourable to the show trade he attributes it to Mr. Smith's desire not to be left behind in the race for profit and a suburban villa, a race which it is tempting to enter in a political climate of laissez-faire:

(1) Besant, Children of Gibeon (London, 1886), book I, ch.v.

(2) Ibid., book II, ch.xxiv.

Fired with the great spirit of the nineteenth century - at least with that one which is vulgarly considered its especial glory - he resolved to make haste to be rich. His father had made money very slowly of late; while dozens, who had begun business long after him, had now retired to luxurious ease and suburban villas...Why should he pay his men two shillings where the government paid them one? Were there not cheap houses, even at the West End, which had saved several thousands a year merely by reducing their workmen's wages? (1)

Besant and Kingsley see some form of association as the only way of combating the exploitation of working tailors, whether men or women. The ideal workshop organization is exemplified in Alton Locke by Eleanor's establishment of work-girls, which is run on co-operative lines, such as those advocated by members of the Christian Socialist fraternity to which Kingsley belonged.

Association was adopted as a principle by some Christian Socialists, notably Ludlow, because it was both a means of combating the influence of the competitive spirit and an embodiment of the Christian sense of the brotherhood of men. The first practical step taken by the Christian Socialists to apply the principles advocated by Ludlow was the establishment of a Working Association for tailors in 1850. Within a few months several associations had been established and it was thought necessary to have a more business-like organization. The Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations was formed to bring together all in the associative movement, whether as promoters or associates.

(1) Kingsley, op.cit., ch.x.

Capital was advanced as loans by wealthy adherents of the cause; with this associative workshops were founded. The net profit or surplus was to be divided every six months between all the Associates in proportion to the time that each had worked. All work was to be done, where possible, on the premises of the Association; there was to be no Sunday work and hours on weekdays were not to exceed ten. Although freed from unscrupulous exploitation by capitalists, the working men in the Association were linked to a Council of Promoters (mainly the leaders of the Christian Socialist movement) who collected and administered all the Society's funds, and had the right to veto the manager appointed by the Association.

Eleanor's association is a simplified version of the Christian Socialist Associations. Her rôle corresponds to that of the wealthy sponsors and Christian Socialist promoters in that she finances the scheme for the seamstresses and manages the accounts for them. The profits from the enterprise are distributed among the girls, and Eleanor lives among them as a sister in Christ, extending her "family" to include reclaimed prostitutes. She is motivated by her Christian beliefs and by a sense of guilt that she is wealthy while others are in poverty. Like the Christian Socialist Movement as a whole, Eleanor is impelled by a spirit of self-sacrifice.

"To become the teacher, the minister, the slave of those whom I was trying to rescue, was now my one idea; to lead them on, not by machinery, but by precept, by example, by the influence of every gift and talent which God had bestowed upon me; to devote to them my enthusiasm, my eloquence, my poetry, my art, my science; to tell them who had bestowed these gifts on me, and would bestow, to each according to her measure, the same on them; to make my workrooms, in one word, not a machinery, but a family. And I have succeeded — as others will succeed, long after my name, my small endeavours, are forgotten amid the great new world — new Church I should have said — of enfranchised and fraternal (1) labour."

There are similarities between Eleanor's scheme and those associative schemes described by Besant in Children of Gibeon and All Sorts and Conditions of Men, although a sense of guilt rather than a desire to put into practice a religious ideal is the motivating power. In Children of Gibeon the initiator of the associative scheme for seamstresses is the aristocratic girl Valentine (who calls herself Polly); and the proceeds of the enterprise she projects will be shared among the working-girls. In All Sorts and Conditions of Men Angela Messenger initiates and finds the capital for a seamstresses' association; like Eleanor and Valentine, she feels the need to put her money and her energies to a socially beneficial purpose. However, there is a particularly strong emphasis in this novel on the importance of using the association as a way of enriching the work-girls' lives by means of a civilizing sense of pleasure. Kingsley faces the possibility of an alternative method of attacking the evils of the

(1) Ibid., ch.xxxix.

competitive society, direct political action through Chartist activities, but he rejects it. Besant comments that the women seamstresses do not help themselves and instances the failure to combine as evidence of this:

Nor will the working-girl expect any help from her own class, because they have not learned to combine, and there is none to teach them, and the sharp lessons, including thwacks, kicks, hammerings, rattening, and boycotting, by which the working-men were forced and driven into their union, are (1) impossible for the girls.

Despite this sympathetic comment on combinations of workmen, Besant's ideal of labour relations is one of benevolent paternalism.

The effectiveness of Besant's portrayal of the victimized work-girls is vitiated by a crude communication of the author's social philosophy, and by his failure to understand the attitudes and feelings of some of this working-class characters. Both these points may be illustrated by an account of his handling of Melenda.

Melenda, the most militant of the working women in Besant's novel, is made into a figure of fun. She immediately strikes the reader with her graceless and inept appearance:

Red hair has its artistic value, and I dare say Melenda's would have looked picturesque had it been respectfully treated. But what can you expect of flaming-red hair if you treat it in London girl fashion - that is, if you cut the front part of it short and comb a great hunch over the forehead, making a red pillow, and then roll the rest of it (2) up in a knot behind?

(1) Besant, op.cit., book I, ch.v.

(2) Ibid.

Another example of Besant's patronizingly mocking approach is his attribution to Melenda of extreme stubbornness and a tendency to flare up in anger about matters which he finds difficult to understand. There is a discrepancy between the effect at which he seems to be aiming and what he actually achieves in his description of the encounters between Melenda and Valentine. When Valentine tries to find out about the life of the Hoxton work-girl by experiencing it herself, Besant represents her decision as admirable for the powers of self-sacrifice and understanding which it reflects; yet her room is full of dainty extras which remind her of the life to which she has been accustomed, and there seems to be ample justification for Melenda's scornful comment:

"It's nothing but play-acting, Polly. Lord! nobody would take you for a work-girl — you and (1) your ulster!"

Because Melenda's stubborn refusal to be impressed by Valentine is wholly understandable, it seems sad rather than, as Besant suggests, a triumph that Melenda finally succumbs meekly to Valentine's condescension:

She threw her arms round poor Melenda's neck, and kissed her a dozen times. "I told you when I came," she said, "that perhaps I was your sister Polly. Perhaps I am not after all. Polly or not, we are sisters, you and I, always sisters. Shall we promise?"

"If — if you like," said Melenda, with such sobs and tears as become the vanquished; "if you like."

"Then, my dear, sisters must do everything they are told to do by each other. You will order me and I will order you. First, I am going to dress you."

(1) Ibid., book II, ch.i.

Melenda was conquered.

Valentine ran into her own room, and came back with a bundle of things.

"Do you think I am going to have my own sister go about in such shocking rags as these any longer? Take off your frock this minute - and oh, the ragged petticoat! Here is one of mine, and a frock, and a pair of my own stockings. (1) Everything has got to be changed."

The tone which pervades the book suggests that, despite his alertness to the sufferings which arise from the seamstress's job, Besant saw her primarily as the fit object of patronage and a different order of mortal from the rich woman whose "consciousness of sin" (2) is the real subject of both Children of Gibeon and All Sorts and Conditions of Men.

Mary Barton and Ruth Hilton belong to a higher echelon of the seamstress's trade than Besant's workgirls. Ruth is an indoor apprentice who is resident and bound for five years on a high premium, Mary an outdoor apprentice living at home. Miss Simmonds' is an inferior establishment for which a premium is not necessary and "where Mary was to work for two years without any remuneration, on consideration of being taught the business; and where afterwards she was to dine and have tea, with a small quarterly salary (paid quarterly, because so much more genteel than by week), a very small one, divisible into a minute weekly pittance." (3)

Mrs. Gaskell reveals incidentally some of the physical hardships of the dressmakers' lives, whether as indoor or outdoor apprentices. Ruth and her companions work long hours

(1) Ibid., book II, ch.xxiv.

(2) See p. 42.

(3) Mary Barton, ch.iii.

and are prone to occupational disorders: Jenny is consumptive, and the girls cooped up in a small workroom have "a deadened sense of life, consequent upon their unnatural mode of existence, their sedentary days, and their frequent nights of late watching."⁽¹⁾ Mary Barton's hours are long, and, when Miss Simmonds is affected by the prevailing economic difficulties, she is deprived of her tea. However, Mrs. Gaskell does not include details of physical hardships as part of a fictional campaign against them; otherwise she would have been less generous to Mrs. Mason, Ruth's employer:

Mrs. Mason was a very worthy woman, but like many other worthy women, she had her foibles; and one (very natural to her calling) was to pay ⁽²⁾ an extreme regard to appearances.

Mrs. Mason was a widow, and had to struggle for the sake of the six or seven children left dependent on her exertions; thus there was some reason, and great excuse, for the pinching economy which ⁽³⁾ regulated her household affairs.

Mrs. Gaskell does write with concern of the moral dangers of the life of the dressmaker's apprentice.⁽⁴⁾ She sees obvious stumbling-blocks in a job in which beauty is an asset.⁽⁵⁾ Ruth is more vulnerable, less knowing than Mary but both are

(1) Mrs. Gaskell, Ruth (London, 1853), ch.i.

(2) *Ibid.*, ch.i.

(3) *Ibid.*, ch.iii.

(4) See Neff, *op.cit.*, pp. 125-128. Little Em'ly is a dressmaker's apprentice who has her head turned by a seducer.

(5) Mary might have been engaged at a superior establishment requiring a premium if she had gone in person to enquire about employment because "her beauty would have made her desirable as a show-woman." (Ch.iii). Ruth's beauty is regarded by her employer as a valuable asset to her business, and she sends her new apprentice to the hunt-ball, although she is not the best work-woman.

subjected to a routine which fosters a craving for any kind of relief. Mary's Aunt Esther sees this as a serious cause of concern:

"I found our Mary went to learn dress-making, and I began to be frightened for her; for it's a bad life for a girl to be out late at night in the streets, and, after many an hour of weary work, they're ready to follow after any novelty that (1) makes a little change."

Mary's fellow work-girl, Sally Leadbitter, who is "vulgar-minded to the last degree", finds her excitement in acting as a go-between for Mary and Harry Carson, and her insensitivity to Mary's feelings and to the implications of the situation when Jem is arrested for the murder of Carson is an indication of her moral stupidity. Neither Mrs. Mason nor Miss Simmonds has a sympathetic understanding of the moral dangers of the life of their apprentices; Miss Simmonds herself shows moral levity, as Sally Leadbitter's comments to Mary indicate:

"Miss Simmonds knows you'll have to be off those two days. But between you and me, she's a bit of a gossip, and will like hearing all how and about the trial, well enough to let you off very (2) easy for your being absent a day or two."

(ii) Black Country Cottage Industries

In this section I shall examine two books, Sybil and Nebo the Nailer. Comparison is difficult because the books are separated by a long period of time — 1845 to 1902 — and because Disraeli's treatment of the Black Country cottage industry of lock-making is confined to a small section of

(1) Mary Barton, ch.xiv.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxv.

his novel, whereas Gould devotes his novel exclusively to the nail-makers. However, there are points of contact, and I shall use these in examining both the evils of the organization of the cottage industries and the two writers' suggestions about means of mitigating or eliminating the evils.

Both Disraeli and Gould recognize as one of the distinctive characteristics of small-scale Black Country industries the working-class origin of the masters. Disraeli says of Wodgate:

Here Labour reigns supreme. Its division indeed is favoured by their manners, but the interference or influence of mere capital is instantly resisted. The business of Wodgate is carried on by master workmen in their own houses, each of whom possesses an unlimited number of what they call apprentices, by whom their affairs are principally conducted, and whom they treat as the Mamelukes treated the Egyptians. (1)

Gould describes how Mrs. Saach's father, a "fogger" or master nail-maker combined "fogging" with the production of nails by himself and his family. Disraeli places more emphasis than Gould on the master/apprentice relationship, probably because he drew his material from the findings of the Children's Employment Commission. Gould concentrates on the relationships between the journeyman nail-maker and fogger and the nail-maker and his family. However, there is a more significant difference in emphasis. Gould exposes the evils of the system which has fostered the middleman; Disraeli is

(1) Disraeli, Sybil (London, 1845), book III, ch.iv.

more interested in the fact that the master is a working man and less in the economic structure of the Black Country cottage industries.

Disraeli presents Hatton's position in Wodgate in complex terms. His is a genuine superiority in that he has more knowledge of affairs than his work-people and is able to impart to them knowledge of a skill:

...it is a real aristocracy; it is privileged, but it does something for its privileges. It is distinguished from the main body not merely by name. It is the most knowing class at Wodgate; it possesses indeed in its way complete knowledge; and it imparts in its manner a certain quantity of it to those whom it guides. Thus it is an aristocracy that leads, and therefore a fact. (1)

It is accepted by the population of Wodgate. Thomas tells Morley, in reply to an enquiry about "Bishop" Hatton:

"That's his name and authority; for he's the governor here over all of us. And it has always been so that Wodgate has been governed by a bishop; because as we have no church, we will have as good." (2)

However, Hatton abuses his power in several respects. He is tyrannical and brutal to his apprentices. Sheila Smith points out in 'Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence' that Disraeli exaggerates this aspect of the behaviour of the master lock-smith, making outrages which are presented by Horne as unusual seem habitual: this is true of the sale of apprentices, the striking of an apprentice on the head with a hammer, and the imposition of severe restrictions on the time allowed for taking meals. (3) Secondly, Hatton

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) For fuller details see Sheila M. Smith, 'Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence', Review of English Studies, New Series, vol. XII, no. 52 (1962), p.378.

has no moral sense of himself, and no concern for the moral and spiritual welfare of his apprentices. The use of the title "Bishop" and the rôle which Hatton arrogates to himself in carrying out marriages are both travesties. The Bishop leads his people in observing the custom of "Saint Monday", whereby Sunday and Monday are devoted to a bout of drinking and the working week lasts effectively for no longer than four days. Disraeli suggests that there is little evidence of gross immorality among the people of Wodgate, but he does so in terms which reveal an equally disturbing state of affairs:

Here is relaxation, excitement; if less vice otherwise than might be at first anticipated, we must remember that excesses are checked by poverty of blood and constant exhaustion. Scanty food and hard labour are in their way, if not exactly moralists, a tolerably good police.

There are no others at Wodgate to preach or to control. It is not that the people are immoral, for immorality implies some forethought; or ignorant, for ignorance is relative; but they are animals; unconscious; their minds a blank; and their worst actions only the impulse of a (1) gross or savage instinct.

The evils of the nail-making industry, as it is depicted in Nebo the Nailer, stem from its economic structure. It is "sweated" in that the journeyman nailer has to work very hard to make a living wage in a low-profit industry, in which there are both capitalists and middlemen and which is threatened by competition from factories. Nebo tells Fred Folly:

(1) Disraeli, op.cit., book III, ch.iv.

"At present every man on the Waste Moor has his house and shop, and works at what times and how long he wills. But he does not receive adequate payment for his work, because the middle-man intervenes." (1)

Gould describes the process whereby the middleman became a significant feature of the industry: the artificer had not enough money to buy a stock of iron rods at wholesale price and he had no storage space for a few tons of the small coal required for his forge; he was therefore compelled to buy a bundle or two of rods, retail, and a small quantity of coal from the middleman. Gould emerges as an environmentalist in his explanation of the coarseness, of morality and manner, of men such as Saach, a middleman:

...the roughness of the battle of life tends, where existence is hard, to obliterate the finer and better qualities, to give prominence to those that are coarse and rude, as the waves on the shore throw farthest upon the beach the largest pebbles (2) and withdraw the sand beneath.

The environment of Waste Moor is seen as an influence on the life which it harbours, not, as in Sybil, a reflection of it. Saach's influence on the workers is less far-reaching than Hatton's. We do not feel while reading Gould's novel that the physical and mental stunting and the demoralization of the workers stem wholly from Saach and his like. Nebo Homer offers an authoritative account of the characteristics of the workers:

"What would your mind become were you to devote it for ten hours each day to the making of only one kind of nail? It would become dead — the mind grows stagnant, as does a pool, unless there be a stream of fresh ideas flowing through it. It is a necessity for our nailers' mental health that they should be given the opportunity of a change of work. Now, when work is slack, they hie to the

(1) S. Baring Gould, Nebo the Nailer (London, 1902), ch.xxxiii.
 (2) Gould, op.cit., ch.xi.

public-house and drink till stupid. I do not blame them. Their intellectual faculties have been stunned by the monotony of their work... They are no longer men made in the image of God, but automata, bits of machinery like the ollifer." (1)

Gould is sympathetic to the concerted action of the nailmakers in striking because it is spontaneous, not inspired by paid agitators who "came down into a pacific district and fomented strife." (2) It is particularly significant, according to Gould, because the Worcestershire nailers are too easily contented. He does not discuss the potential value of trade unionism for workers in cottage industries, but he is clearly critical of Nebo's zeal to eliminate capitalism. Nebo is seen as impulsive: Sylvia "was conscious that in his irregular judgement he was incapable of discriminating between remediable injustice and irremediable hardship." (3) She feels that it is her duty, as a rich woman, to take the initiative in helping working people; otherwise "the working man, with no adequate knowledge of the laws of social and commercial economy, will take the matter into his own hands and upset the whole kettle of fish." (4) The establishment of the Nailers' Co-operative furnishes solutions to several problems set out in the novel. It provides the wealthy with a sense of purpose, as the change in Fred Folly exemplifies. It does not undermine capitalism - Nebo's compromise is presented as a triumph of commonsense

(1) Ibid., ch.xiii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxxiv.

(3) Ibid., ch.xxxv.

(4) Ibid., ch.xxxiv.

over impetuous idealism - but it does avoid two kinds of industrial organization which Gould sees as undesirable - the factory system, which imposes a work-rhythm on people and deprives them of their freedom to work at their own pace, and the middleman system, which deprives some of the workers of their independence and of the full value of their labour.

The kind of association described by Gould involves the patronage and guidance of the rich and is akin to the conception of ideal labour-relations put forward by Besant. In the work of both writers there is a sense that the workers have limited understanding and need the help of those outside their class. Disraeli's ideal labour-relationship is also paternalistic and depends far more on the influence of one man. There is no solution to the evils and problems of Wodgate in the form of a representation of an ideal pattern of relations within the same industry; but Trafford is clearly meant to balance and contrast with Hatton. Both have people working for them; both have control over the physical circumstances of and the moral and educational well-being of their workers. From the contrast between the two men Disraeli suggests that the true aristocrat is a protector of labour - but the true aristocrat of labour is an irresponsible exploiter.

CHAPTER VII

WORKING MEN AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

The novels on which I shall draw for this chapter have been brought together for two reasons: each deals with at least one working man who is interested in political issues or committed to a political cause⁽¹⁾; and, even in a novel such as Sybil, written with a propagandist purpose, the politically aware working man is more than a mere cipher in the argument.⁽²⁾ The chapter will take the form of an examination of a character or a group of characters from each of six novels written or published during the period 1845-1914:- Gerard and Morley in Sybil (1845), Locke in Alton Locke (1850), Holt in Felix Holt (1866), Robinson in The Princess Casamassima (1886), Mutimer in Demos (1886) and Owen and his fellow workmen in The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (1914).⁽³⁾ I shall consider the following issues (not necessarily in this order):

- (i) the relationship between the man and both the working classes and the political movement to which he adheres;

-
- (1) I am using the term "political" to refer to the attitudes and activities of members of a movement or party concerned primarily with principles of government and the social and economic structures deriving from them.
 - (2) In this chapter I shall not examine novels written as purely political propaganda, only those which explore the characters of politically committed working men. See Appendix III for a brief survey of novels advocating Socialism which deal with working men very slightly.
 - (3) 1914 is the date of the first publication of Tressell's novel, although he died in 1911.

- (ii) whether the working man is treated as a representative figure and, if so, of what;
- (iii) what is revealed of the author's political attitudes by his characterization of the politically aware working man⁽¹⁾;
- (iv) in what respects the characterization is convincing or unconvincing.

I shall begin with Felix Holt, out of the chronological sequence of dates of publication, because it deals with the earliest time historically, the period of the 1832 Reform Act. After this the order of publication has been followed.

A. PARLIAMENTARY REFORM: 1832

Felix Holt

Although George Eliot's novel Felix Holt is set in the period of the first election after the passing of the 1832 Reform Bill, she is only marginally concerned with the merits of the political parties.⁽²⁾ Her two male protagonists, Holt and Transome, are differentiated not by political categories, but by the interpretation each puts on his political allegiance. The two men differ in their motivation, their priorities, and their conceptions of the

(1) I shall sometimes draw upon biographical material and letters for evidence of the author's political attitudes.

(2) She is not neutral: the Tories are not favourably portrayed.

relation of means to ends.⁽¹⁾

When Holt tries to define for Esther the source of his interest in Radicalism, his mode of expression suggests that he has made no calculation, merely responded to the pressure of circumstances; and he uses the language of religious dedication:

"It all depends on what a man gets into his consciousness - what life thrusts into his mind...There are two things I've got present in that way: one of them is the picture of what I should hate to be. I'm determined never to go about making my face simpering or solemn, and telling professional lies for profit..."

"The other thing that's got into my mind like a splinter," said Felix, after a pause, "is the life of the miserable - the spawning life of vice and hunger...The old Catholics are right, with their higher rule and their lower. Some are called to subject themselves to a harder discipline, and renounce things voluntarily which are lawful for others." (2)

Holt is speaking of the kind of altruism for which the term "benevolence" is too weak. It is a noble dedication to humanity which, though entered upon involuntarily, involves self-discipline and self-sacrifice. Holt's altruism is similar to Dorothea's in that its essence is self-renunciation, but it escapes the ironical treatment accorded to Dorothea's yearnings in the early part of Middlemarch because Holt

(1) There is, of course, more than a static contrast between Holt and Transome; there is also a dynamic interweaving of their destinies:

...a young man named Felix Holt made a considerable difference in the life of Harold Transome, though nature and fortune seemed to have done what they could to keep the lots of the two men aloof from each other. (George Eliot, Felix Holt, London and Edinburgh, 1866, ch.iii.)

(2) Ibid., ch.xxvii.

defines his objectives more clearly than Dorothea.

Transom's motives for standing as a Radical candidate are analysed in terms which suggest that he has skilfully reconciled conviction with expediency:

He meant to stand up for every change that the economical condition of the country required, and he had an angry contempt for men with coronets on their coaches, but too small a share of brains to see when they had better make a virtue of necessity. His respect was rather for men who had no coronets, but who achieved a just influence by furthering all measures which the common sense of the country, and the increasing self-assertion of the majority, peremptorily demanded. He (1) could be such a man himself.

She shows that Transome is no hypocrite, but he is worldly. The language of calculation would be inappropriate to Holt, who has withdrawn from "the push and the scramble for money and position."⁽²⁾ Holt remains a working man not because he is incapable of doing a job which will give him middle-class status, nor because opportunities are lacking. George Eliott stresses that he chooses to stay as close as possible to the class of his origins.

Holt's political and social priorities are contrasted with those of both Transome and the trade union leader who speaks in the street in Treby Magna. By standing as a candidate, Transome is putting himself inside the pale of party politics, the boundaries of which he accepts; but Holt wants to go "to some roots a good deal lower down than the franchise."⁽³⁾ The contrast between Holt and the trade

(1) Ibid., ch.viii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxvii.

(3) Ibid.

union leader makes the distinction explicit. Whereas the union man hopes for social reform through the acquisition of the franchise for working men, Holt considers it imperative that they should seek wisdom with which to use power responsibly, a contention developed at length in Felix Holt's 'Address to Working Men', written after the passing of the 1867 Reform Act.⁽¹⁾ In his 'Address' Holt specifies the constituents of this wisdom as "knowledge, ability, and honesty"⁽²⁾; wisdom and virtue cannot be attributed to men unless they are "skilful, faithful, well-judging, industrious, sober..."⁽³⁾. In Felix Holt he fears the irresponsible power of "ignorant numbers":

"...there are two sorts of power. There's a power to do mischief - to undo what has been done with great expense and labour, to waste and destroy, to be cruel to the weak, to lie and quarrel, and to talk poisonous nonsense. That's⁽⁴⁾ the sort of power that ignorant numbers have."

In the 'Address' Holt emphasizes to the newly enfranchised the heavy responsibility they bear, rather than indulging in an outburst of rejoicing. He exhorts working men to turn class interest into class functions and duties, rather than using it to work for the abolition of class distinctions.

-
- (1) The Second Reform Act (1867) granted the vote to all male householders in towns, thus enfranchising the majority of urban working men.
 - (2) George Eliot, 'Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt', first published in Blackwood's Magazine, 1868, reprinted in Essays and Leaves from a Notebook (Edinburgh and London, 1884). Quotation from this edition, p. 325.
 - (3) Ibid., p. 323.
 - (4) Felix Holt, ch.xxx.

George Eliot is close to Kingsley in her earnest stress on the moral life of the individual and its importance in determining the moral character of society.

Holt's fears are supported in the novel by the portrayal of the working men of Sproxtton - miners, navvies and stone-cutters - of whom he says:

"Till they can show there's something they love better than swilling themselves with ale, extension of the suffrage can never mean anything for them (1) but extension of boozing."

An extract from a conversation about changes effected by the Reform Act will illustrate several of the other characteristics which George Eliot attributes to them. The men are talking about election agents:

"I heared a chap say they're up and down everywhere," said Brindle; "and now's the time, they say, when a man can get beer for nothing."

"Ay, that's sin' the Reform," said a big, red-whiskered man, called Dredge. "That's brought the 'lections and the drink into these parts; for afore that, it was all kep up the Lord knows wheer."

"Well, but the Reform's niver come anigh Sprox'on," said a grey-haired but stalwart man called Old Sleek. "I don't believe nothing about 'n, I don't."

"Don't you?" said Brindle, with some contempt. "Well, I do. There's folks won't believe beyond the end o' their own pickaxes. You can't drive nothing into 'em, not if you split their skulls. I know for certain sure, from a chap in the cartin' way, as he's got money and drink too, (2) only for hollering."

(1) Ibid., ch.xi. Like Alton Locke's concern for the welfare of his fellow working men, Holt's complex attitude includes a contempt for their wasting money on drink.

(2) Ibid.

Their speech has vitality, with its vivid imagery and touches of humorous exaggeration; but it also reflects the limitations of the men using it:- the restricted understanding of what the Reform Bill signifies, the reliance on hearsay (with "a chap in the cartin' way" a slightly more reliable source than "they"), the tendency to use dogmatic assertion to mask ignorance. The evidence given by Mike Brindle at Holt's trial reflects another characteristic of this group of workman:- an inability to see beyond the personal. The danger which they represent to a well ordered society is illustrated in two ways. The mob which turns to violence does so mindlessly, not because it is bent on attacking the middle and upper classes in order to wrest its rights by force. In the 'Address' Holt rejects the notion that stress on the preservation of order in society indicates a conservative political bias:

...the public order being preserved, there can be no government in future that will not be determined by our insistence on our fair and practicable demands. It is only by disorder (1) that our demands will be choked...

A more insidious danger lies in the vulnerability of the Sproxton working men to the bribes of those who flatter them, as Transome does through Johnson. He thus does nothing to foster that enlightenment which Holt believes to be important.

The third point of comparison and contrast between Transome and Holt differentiates their attitudes to the means by which Radical aims are achieved. When Holt follows

(1) Essays and Leaves from a Notebook, p. 338.

the trade union speaker, he denounces political corruption:

"...while public opinion is what it is - while men have no better beliefs about public duty - while corruption is not felt to be a damning disgrace - while men are not ashamed in Parliament and out of it to make public questions which concern the welfare of millions a mere screen for their own petty private ends, - I say, no fresh scheme for voting will much mend our condition."⁽¹⁾

Transome is irritated by Holt's attitude:

Harold...disliked impracticable notions of loftiness and purity - disliked all enthusiasm; and he thought he saw a very troublesome, vigorous incorporation of that nonsense in Felix.⁽²⁾

The antithesis which moves into focus here is that between worldliness and enthusiasm.⁽³⁾ Transome's worldliness is not the pursuit of pleasure but a pragmatism which imposes limits on spiritual aspiration, applying utilitarian principles to attitudes and behaviour. In practical terms Holt achieves little: he makes less impact on the Sproxton workmen than Transome's hired man, Johnson; and he is imprisoned for a crime of which he is innocent. But George Eliot suggests that "enthusiasm" is the only effective defence against the cancer of corruption which Transome's worldliness fosters.

(1) Felix Holt, ch.xxx.

(2) Ibid., ch.xvi.

(3) See Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (Yale, 1957), pp. 264 ff. for a discussion of several manifestations of Victorian enthusiasm. Houghton gives a helpful definition of the term as it was used in early Victorian writing:

That higher state of mind, in which the selfish desires of the ego, far from having to be conquered by the moral will, are swept aside by the selfless impulse of the "noble" emotions, is a state of enthusiasm. (Pp. 263-4).

There is both consistency and subtlety in George Eliot's ideological pattern, worked out through the contrast between Holt and Transome. However, there is some crudity in the means by which she asserts Holt's working-class identity. She uses stereotyping traits: he is shaggy haired, untidily dressed, loud-voiced, and abrupt in manner. She does not use these details as part of her evaluation of Holt, as Gissing does with Mutimer: they are merely signposts. However, some of them sit uneasily beside the assertion that he is more sensitive and cultured than the trade-union leader, especially as several of Holt's statements about social attitudes are expressed in the language of class prejudice. (1)

B. CHARTISM

(1) Gerard and Morley

Even a cursory examination of Disraeli's political life between 1839 and 1845, the year of the publication of Sybil, reveals his undisguised sympathy with some aspects of Chartism and his respect for some of the men involved as leaders. As a Member of Parliament during the period which saw the presentation of the Third Chartist Petition and the removal of the Chartist Convention to Birmingham, among other major Chartist activities, Disraeli was in a position to evaluate the public culmination of the Movement's agitations,

(1) See Chapter IV, p. 143.

and the official response. He also had access to the correspondence of Feargus O'Connor, when he was editor of the Northern Star, with the chief actors in the Chartist agitations.⁽¹⁾ I shall argue in this section that, while his treatment of Gerard and Morley gives a strong sense of his sympathy with Chartism, it represents in some ways an evasion of the challenge presented by the Movement.

In a speech made in a debate on 12 July 1839, after the First Chartist Petition had been presented to Parliament, Disraeli made it clear that he sympathized with the Chartists, although he disapproved of the Charter. He based his sympathy on endorsement of their diagnosis of social ills, and found nothing in the quality of the Movement's leadership to upset his attitude: he did not think that Chartism could be explained as the work of professional agitators or as the outcome of sedition. However, he did not accept the Chartists' assumption that the acquisition of political rights would necessarily ensure social happiness for working people.⁽²⁾ Despite his reservations, he actively showed his disapproval of some official moves against Chartism: in 1840 he helped Radical friends to obtain a remission of what he regarded as the excessive punishment inflicted on Chartist leaders; and, after the riot which took place when the Convention moved to Birmingham, he opposed Lord John Russell's appeal to the Commons to authorize an advance to Birmingham

(1) The letters were obtained for Disraeli by Thomas Duncombe.

(2) For fuller details, see W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle, Disraeli (London, 1910), revised edition in two vols. (1929), pp. 480-482.

Corporation for the establishment of a police force, basing his opposition on the belief that inquiry into the insurrectionary spirit should precede the granting of extraordinary powers.

Morley and Gerard impress Egremont, whose contact with them formed a major part of his journey of discovery into the alien realms of the people; and Disraeli uses Egremont as a mediating consciousness here. Morley, like Kingsley's Crossthwaite, is an ascetic, and his collection of books speaks of an intellectual capacity which is presented with unqualified admiration: we are told that he read books which "treated of the loftiest and most subtle questions of social and political philosophy."⁽¹⁾ It is Morley's diagnosis of society's ills which is the basis of the novel's political argument: both the concept of aggregation and the notion that England is two nations, rich and poor, are used as yardsticks by Disraeli. Those members of the ruling classes who do not recognize the existence of the gulf between the "Two Nations" are unenlightened. Egremont is distinguished from them because he perceives its importance, although he does not share Morley's defeatism about the social condition of the country. Morley's distinction between aggregation and community helps to "place" Wodgate, which is an example of aggregation. The conduct of Morley and Gerard, as Chartist delegates deputed to visit a number of public figures, is courteous and restrained; and,

(1) Disraeli, Sybil (London, 1845), book II, ch.xvi.
Cf. Gissing's comment on Mutimer's reading, Demos, ch.v.

although Gerard is a "physical force" Chartist, he is responsible and morally refined.

Disraeli's favourable treatment of Morley and Gerard is supported by the novel's depiction of the distress of the working classes: the evils of the truck system, the poverty of handloom weavers such as Warner, and the ignorance and oppression of the inhabitants of Wodgate form a pattern which makes the Chartist agitations understandable. Disraeli's willingness to present the movement in a favourable light is most clearly seen in his treatment of the two mass torchlight meetings. R.G. Gammage's History of the Chartist Movement, 1834-57, provides some interesting points of similarity and contrast in a discussion of the phenomenon of torchlight meetings.⁽¹⁾ Disraeli's meetings are peaceful, and the workers show an impressive orderliness when they turn their gathering into a triumphal procession for Gerard on his release from prison:

The interminable population, the mighty melody, the incredible order, the simple yet awful solemnity, this representation of the great cause to which she [Sybil] was devoted under an aspect that at once satisfied the reason, captivated the imagination, and elevated the heart - her admiration of her father, thus ratified as it were by the sympathy of a nation - added to all the recent passages of her life teeming with such strange and trying interests, overcame Sybil. (2)

-
- (1) Gammage was actively involved in Chartism in a variety of towns, including Northampton, where he organized the local movement. He first published his book in 1854, but it was extensively revised for a second edition, which came out in 1894, and a facsimile of which was published by the Merlin Press in 1969. This edition is the source of my references and quotations.
- (2) Disraeli, op.cit., book V, ch.x.

Gammage draws attention to the less impressive characteristics of torchlight meetings held in 1838 and later. The large numbers were orderly, but more threatening and more uncouth in appearance than in Disraeli's account. Workmen arrived "begrimed with sweat and dirt"⁽¹⁾, and their banners frequently bore sinister motifs, such as death's heads.

Gammage specifies the mottoes on some of the banners carried at a meeting in Hyde, addressed by the Rev. Rayner Stephens:

...a large number of banners were to be seen in the blazing light. On one of these was Stephens' favourite device,

"For children and wife, we'll war to the knife!"

On another, the scriptural quotation, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." A third bore the inscription, "Ashton demands universal suffrage or universal vengeance!" Another banner showed the words, "Remember the bloody deeds of Peterloo!" while a fifth bore the ominous inscription, "Tyrants, believe and tremble!" There were a large number of red caps of liberty carried upon poles, and, at intervals, the loud reports from pistols announced the fact that persons at the meeting were armed. (2)

Stephens is taken to task by Gammage for his inflammatory speeches:

O'Connor, Stephens and M'Douall were frequent attendants at the torch-light meetings, and their language was almost unrestrained by any motives of prudence. Incitements to the use of arms formed the staple of the speeches of the two latter gentlemen...Stephens did not hesitate to declare that the ruling class were nothing better than a gang of murderers, whose blood was required to satisfy the demands of public justice. (3)

(1) R.G. Gammage, History of the Chartist Movement, 1837-1854 (London, 1854) second edition (1894), p. 95.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

Gerard's address to the first large outdoor meeting described in Sybil is not reproduced, but Disraeli's reference to its effect on the audience suggest that his exhortations were materially different from those of Stephens. The people are enjoined to "depart in peace", and they leave "bearing back to the town their high resolves and panting thoughts..."⁽¹⁾

In Gerard Disraeli seems to have depicted a Chartist leader as he would have liked him to be. The Young England group of Tories, who looked to Disraeli for leadership⁽²⁾, showed sympathy with and faith in the labouring poor; and during the discussions about Chartism in 1840 Disraeli said, both publicly and privately, that the aristocracy were the natural leaders of the people, and that "an union between the Conservative party and the Radical masses offers the only means by which we can preserve the Empire."⁽³⁾ In creating Gerard Disraeli has made him a figure highly acceptable to an aristocratic leader, both because of his character and because of his own aristocratic origins, which make him an exceptional working man. He is also exceptional in the precise focus of his idealization of the past:

(1) Disraeli, op.cit., book IV, ch.iv.

(2) The Young England group of Tories comprised young men in the Parliament of 1841 who had been educated together at Eton and Cambridge. They included George Smythe, the model for Waldershare in Endymion and Harry Coningsby in Coningsby; and Lord John Manners, the original of Lord Henry Sydney in Coningsby and Tancred. Although Disraeli was not an exact contemporary, the group began to rally round him in 1843 because his ideals matched theirs.

(3) Monypenny and Buckle, op.cit., p. 486.

"All agree that the Monastics were easy landlords; their rents were low; they granted leases in those days. Their tenants, too, might renew their term before their tenure ran out: so they were men of spirit and property. There were yeomen then, sir: the country was not divided into two classes, masters and slaves; there was some resting-place between (1) luxury and misery."

Although some Chartist leaders looked to the past for their ideals and models, they perceived something different from Gerard. Stephens and O'Connor returned to rural England before the Industrial Revolution, to what they imagined had been "a nation of small farmers, a contented peasantry, rooted to the soil." (2) They did not look back as far as the Middle Ages, and they were not interested in the leadership of the Church. In his book on Chartism Mark Hovell claims:

The Chartists rejected the leadership of the "old nobility", of the landed aristocracy and the priest, almost as hotly as they resisted the patronage of (3) the plutocrat and the capitalist.

Morley is on the periphery of Chartism. His position is close to that of Alton Locke after his disillusionment with Chartism, in that his primary concern is the reform of the moral being. He says to Sybil:

"This convention, as you well know, was never much to my taste. Their Charter is a coarse specific for our social evils. The spirit that would cure (4) our ills must be of a deeper and finer mood."

Moreover, his rôle as a Chartist becomes confused by his position in the narrative as Egremont's jealous rival for

(1) Disraeli, op.cit., book II, ch.v.

(2) Mark Hovell, The Chartist Movement (Manchester, 1918), third edition (1966), pp.307-8.

(3) Ibid., p. 308.

(4) Disraeli, op.cit., book IV, ch.ix.

Sybil's love. In order to restore Sybil and her father to their inheritance, he compromises his principles as a "moral-force" Chartist, and makes us wonder whether Disraeli, in his working out of the characterization of Morley, is making a general comment on Chartists. It seems unlikely, especially as Morley claims that his love for Sybil has overridden all other impulses in his life:

"The world will misjudge me; the man of peace they will say was a hypocrite. The world will be wrong, as it always is...We have struggled together before, Egremont...Your star has controlled mine; and now I feel I have sacrificed life and fame - dying men prophesy - for your profit and honour. O Sybil!" and with this name half sighed upon his lips, the votary of Moral Power and the Apostle of Community ceased to exist. (1)

Although Disraeli's handling of the characters of Morley and Gerard both sidesteps the issue of Chartist leadership and takes some of the teeth out of the Movement, his depiction of Hatton's rôle as a tool of Chartism in his fictional equivalent of the Plug Plot Riots indicates that he feared its power of attracting - and recruiting - uncontrollable and irresponsible elements. (2)

(iii) Alton Locke

In 1848, Kingsley wrote to Thomas Cooper:

I want some one like yourself, intimately acquainted with the minds of the working

(1) Ibid., book VI, ch.xii.

(2) Because I have chosen to concentrate on the prominent fictional working men connected with political movements, I have not discussed Disraeli's treatment of the reception of the Chartist Petition in Parliament. Disraeli's matter-of-fact presentation of the episode (book V, ch.i) is a contrast to Mrs. Gaskell's livelier, dramatic account of the same incident through a conversation between John and Mary Barton (Mary Barton, ch.ix).

classes, to give me such an insight into their life and thoughts, as may enable me to consecrate my powers effectually to their service. For them I have lived for several years. I come to ask you if you can tell me how to live more completely for them. (1)

This letter initiated a long correspondence between Kingsley and Cooper, who became the model for the self-educated working man, Alton Locke. (2) In the political heat of 1848 Kingsley professed sympathy for the Chartists, sometimes in a starting manner. In the summer some Christian Socialists who felt that the People's Charter had not had a fair hearing contacted the working men's leaders in Granbourn Tavern, and during this meeting Kingsley declared:

"I am a Church of England parson - and a Chartist". (3) In fact, one of the workmen present had attacked the Church and clergy with venom, and Kingsley's remark was part of a reply which was probably intended as an emollient. He went on to give a more balanced account of his attitude to Chartism. He maintained that the people were right to assert the need for further reform of Parliament; said that he sympathized with their sense of the injustice of the legal system as it affected them; and promised to help the Chartists. However, he denounced their methods of trying to secure their demands. His reservations about Chartism were clearly expressed in a

(1) Letter to Thomas Cooper, 19 June 1848, quoted in Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life, edited by Mrs. Fanny Kingsley (London, 1876), tenth edition (1878), p. 184.

(2) Locke resembles Cooper in his zeal for self-education, his temperance, his support for Chartism and his imprisonment for causing a riot, but Cooper did not become a Christian Socialist.

(3) Kingsley: Letters and Memories, p. 166.

'Letter to Chartists' in the first number of the Christian Socialist Politics for the People, published on 6 May:

I think you have fallen into just the same mistake as the rich of whom you complain - the very mistake which has been our curse and our nightmare: I mean, the mistake of fancying that legislative reform is social reform, or that men's hearts can be changed by Act of (1) Parliament.

By 1862, when he wrote a preface to Alton Locke addressed to Cambridge undergraduates, Kingsley had come to rest in a conservative position in his attitude to relations between the middle and working classes. He says of the university students:

...if they are willing to make themselves, as they easily can, the best educated, the most trustworthy, the most virtuous, the most truly liberal-minded class of the commonweal; if they will set themselves to study the duties of rank and property, as of a profession to which they are called by God, and the requirements of which they must fulfil; if they will acquire, as they can easily, a sound knowledge both of political economy and of the social questions of the day; if they will be foremost with their personal influence in all good works; if they will set themselves to compete on equal terms with the classes below them, and, as they may, outrival them: then they will find that these classes will receive them not altogether on equal terms; that they will accede to them a superiority, undefined, perhaps, but real and practical enough to conserve their class and their rank, in every article for (2) which a just and prudent man would wish.

In Alton Locke Kingsley's sympathies with the Chartists' grievances and some of their demands are reflected in his treatment of the Movement in the early part of the novel, but his use of Locke as protagonist and first-person narrator

(1) Ibid., p. 164.

(2) Kingsley, Alton Locke (London, 1850), preface to 1862 edition.

leads to some uncertainty and inconsistency in the handling of his character: he has to bear the burden of Kingsley's Christian Socialist propaganda, and this at times militates against a convincing portrayal of Locke the Chartist.

Locke challenges what he sees as middle-class hysteria about Chartism by attacking the assumption that Chartists are violent and ill-regulated:

...who among them, my aristocratic readers, do you think, have been the great preachers and practisers of temperance, thrift, charity, self-respect, and education? Who? - shriek not in your Belgravian saloons - the Chartists; the communist Chartists: upon whom you and your venal press heap every kind of cowardly execration and ribald slander. You have found out many things since Peterloo; add that fact to the number. (1)

The virtues here attributed to Chartists seem to be intended to allay middle-class fears of the actions of an ignorant, irresponsible mob, and thrift and temperance would be particularly strong antidotes to the influence of one stereotype of a working man, the drunken and feckless. The pattern of characterization provides support for Locke's challenge: the intemperate and feckless working man, represented by Jemmy Downes, is apathetic about Chartist ideals, and hostile to Crossthwaite, a Chartist and teetotaler. (2) However,

(1) Ibid., ch.ii.

(2) In their article 'Chartism, Liberalism and the life of Robert Lowery', English Historical Review, vol. 82 (July 1967), Brian Harrison and Patricia Hollis emphasize the connection between Chartism and the teetotal movement. Lowery, Hetherington, Lovett and Cleave attacked in print working-class expenditure on drink. When he was in Leicester, Cooper fostered habits of temperance in his adult Sunday School, and he and the members devised a new pledge:
 "I hereby promise to abstain, etc., until the People's Charter becomes the law of the land."
 (Thomas Cooper, The Life of Thomas Cooper, London, 1872, Victorian Library edition, 1971, p. 165.)

one of the novel's supports for the assertion of the superiority of Christian Socialism is the portrayal of Chartism at the time of the presentation of the Monster Petition. Here Kingsley dwells on the reckless, potentially violent elements in the Movement. Locke's Chartist companions include not only Crossthwaite and Mackaye but also the egotistical, hot headed O'Flynn, and a group of "physical force" Chartists constituting a motley assortment of wretched and unstable human beings:

Three-fourths, I saw at once, were slop-working tailors. There was a bloused and bearded Frenchman or two; but the majority were, as was to have been expected, the oppressed, the starved, the untaught, the despairing, the insane; the "dangerous classes," which society creates, and then shrinks in horror, like Frankenstein, from the monster her⁽¹⁾ own clumsy ambition has created.

By dwelling on the dominance of violent and reckless elements in Chartism in 1848, Kingsley undermines the efficacy of his earlier counterblast to prejudices and irrational fears.

An inability to understand a Chartist's social attitudes is revealed by some of the responses attributed to Locke. When, for example, he is entertained at the home of Dean Winnstay, he is impressed by the courtesy of the members of a household in which he is allowed to drink water without being made to feel an eccentric or a killjoy, and he comments favourably upon the "courtesy and condescension"⁽²⁾ of his hosts. However, in a serious respect the Dean showed himself insensitive to Chartist feelings when he said to Locke:

(1) Alton Locke, ch.xxxiii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xiv.

"I advise you most earnestly, as you value your future success in life, to give up reading those unprincipled authors, whose aim is to excite the evil passions of the multitude; and to shut your ears betimes to the extravagant calumnies of demagogues, who make tools of enthusiastic and imaginative minds for their own selfish aggrandisement. Avoid politics; the workman has no more to do with them than the clergyman." (1)

It seems unlikely that the Dean's act of courtesy earlier would be sufficient to outweigh the hostility that a Chartist would feel towards a man who spoke lightly of the working man's rôle in politics. Although Locke's infatuation with Lillian conflicts with his political allegiance, the sense of conflict is not forcefully evoked. Yet he is not a half-hearted Chartist. Even after spending time in prison for incitement to riot, he enters into the conspiratorial atmosphere of the Chartist movement before the presentation of the last Petition.

"Ay - like cowards they shall fall!"...and from that moment I was a rebel and a conspirator. (2)

Like George Eliot in Felix Holt, Kingsley emphasizes the need for reform of the inner man as a prerequisite of the moral well-being of society. However, he polarizes moral reform and political reform by causing Locke to reject Chartism before he embraces Christian Socialism partly on the grounds of his recognition of the need to "look within" first. If it were granted that Chartism gave irresponsible men opportunities to harm society, it does not follow that the moral reform of the individual should be seen as an

(1) Ibid., ch.xiii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxxii.

alternative to agitation for political reform; yet this is apparently what is implied in the comment attributed to Locke:

"If we had but the Charter" - was the excuse for a thousand lazinesses, procrastinations. "If we had but the Charter" - I should be good, and free, and happy. Fool that I was! It was within, rather than without, that I needed reform. (1)

C. SOCIALISM

(1) Hyacinth Robinson

In Henry James's The Princess Casamassima the hub from which everything in the novel radiates is, as James points out in his preface, not the Socialist revolutionary movement itself but the consciousness of the protagonist:

...the figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations; since the consciousness, on their part, of the complication exhibited forms for us their link of connexion (2) with it.

The author's account of the genesis of the novel also indicates his emphasis:

The simplest account of the origin of The Princess Cassamassima is, I think, that this fiction proceeded quite directly, during the first year of a long residence in London, from the habit and the interest of walking the streets... It is a fact that, as I look back, the attentive exploration of London, the assault directly made by the great city upon an imagination quick to react, fully explains a large part of it...

(1) Ibid., ch.x.

(2) Henry James, The Princess Casamassima, first published in the Atlantic Monthly, September 1885-October 1886, preface. James's novel is a sport both within his oeuvre and within the genre which is the subject of this thesis.

...I arrived so at the history of little Hyacinth Robinson - he sprang up for me out (1) of the London pavement.

The political movement into which Hyacinth Robinson is drawn is merely adumbrated in the novel. Although there is a description of a meeting of revolutionaries who gather at "The Sun and Moon", it gradually becomes clear that they do not represent the power-house of the movement. Muniment seems to be in direct contact with the real authorities; yet we learn that he is not implicitly trusted and has a relatively minor rôle; Hoffendahl never appears: the context of the assignment to Robinson of the assassination of a nobleman is never made clear. James stresses that the essence of the movement is its secrecy:

...the value I wished most to render and the effect I wished most to produce were precisely those of our not knowing, of society's not knowing, but only guessing and suspecting and trying to ignore, what "goes on" irreconcilably, (2) subversively, beneath the vast surface.

However, it is possible to communicate the notion of society's ignorance of the Movement, without concealing its aims and means from the reader. Either James himself was unsure of the facts, or he deliberately suppressed details in order to shed the illumination elsewhere, in this case on the psychology of the protagonist. The first alternative cannot be ruled out: although James was in the habit of reading newspapers thoroughly, he would not be able to glean from this source sufficient detail about the inner workings of a revolutionary Socialist organization to represent it adequately in a novel.

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

Robinson is not typical of the artisan class to which he belongs: as the son of a French dancer who murdered her lover, the boy's natural father, his origin is bizarre but important in the context of The Princess Casamassima because at several points in the novel James appears to have a view of heredity according to which physical qualities and facets of character are determined by descent.⁽¹⁾ That his heredity is important in placing Robinson socially is suggested by his reply to Lady Aurora Langrish, when she claims that he is an exception to his belief that the people of his own class "were generally very stupid"⁽²⁾:

"I've blood in my veins that's not the blood of (3)
the people."

The origin of Robinson is a pointer to the centre of interest in The Princess Casamassima. Although Gissing and James adhere to similar attitudes of "racial" determinism, there is no parallel situation with that in Demos in which Richard Mutimer's class origins resist suppression and fit

-
- (1) In his first description of Lady Aurora Langrish, James uses the language of socio-biological analysis:
She was plain and diffident and she might have been poor; but in the fine grain and sloping, shrinking slimness of her whole person, the delicacy of her curious features and a kind of cultivated quality in her sweet, vague, civil expression, there was a suggestion of race...of an organism that had resulted from fortunate touch after touch. She was not a common woman; she was one of the caprices of an aristocracy. (Book I, ch.viii.)

Millicent is defined in terms of her geographical and, by implication, her social, context:

She was to her blunt, expanded finger-tips a daughter of London; of the crowded streets and bustling traffic of the great city. (Book I, ch.iv.)

- (2) Ibid., ch.xv.

- (3) Ibid.

ill with his bourgeois aspirations. Instead he concentrates on the conflict within Robinson between a sense of the need for social reform, perhaps by means of revolution, if necessary, and the desire to preserve society's civilized heritage, created and preserved by an aristocracy whom the revolution would destroy. By showing how the figures of his dead parents become more important to him in his increasing bewilderment, James links the inward struggle to ineradicable hereditary forces:

The thought of his mother had filled him with the vague clumsy fermentation of his first impulses toward social criticism; but since the problem had become more complex by the fact that many things in the world as it was constituted were to grow intensely dear to him he had tried more and more to construct some conceivable and human countenance for his father - some expression of honour, of tenderness and recognition, of unmerited suffering, or at least of adequate expiation. To desert one of the presences for the other - that idea was the source of shame, as an act of treachery would have been; for he could almost hear the voice of his father ask him if it were the conduct of a gentleman to take up the opinions and emulate the crudities of fanatics and cadets. (1)

His conception of Robinson's origins enables James to avoid a difficulty which he discusses at length in the Preface, the problem of credibility. After describing how he arrived at the history of Hyacinth Robinson as his theme, James continues:

...if one could only see him feel enough to be interesting without his feeling so much as not (2) to be natural.

(1) Ibid., book V, ch. xxxviii.

(2) Ibid., preface.

In attributing to Hyacinth a degree of sensitivity which makes him a suitable protagonist, James may seem to be suggesting that he is superior to his fellow artisans because of his semi-aristocratic origins and thus to be underestimating the importance of environment in his mental and emotional development. In James's defence it is necessary to point out that Hyacinth is early made aware of his social incongruity, since Miss Pynsent cannot resist telling him that he has aristocratic connections. This would arguably account for the heightened awareness of isolation which informs his observations. Because Hyacinth explores the variety of London's life as James did, few adjustments are needed to the author's own observations of the city. The only major difference between the responses of Hyacinth and those of James himself is that Robinson sometimes experiences an anguished sense that the most precious objects and experience are unattainable to him. By making Robinson exceptional James avoided the problem which Gissing faced in Demos where the protagonist is a representative figure of the artisan class. It is thus not justifiable to conclude that the impression of greater closeness between author and protagonist in The Princess Casamissima indicates that James was more sympathetic towards, or closer in understanding to, the working man than was Gissing.

Robinson's attitude to the mass of working people and, more clearly, to the Socialist revolutionary movement, which champions their cause, is a complex and subtly

developing one. His interest in the revolutionary movement has personal origins - it does not stem from altruism and it derives from moods rather than settled principles:

He was liable to moods in which the sense of exclusion from all he would have liked most to enjoy in life settled on him like a pall. They had a bitterness, but they were not invidious - they were not moods of vengeance, of imaginary spoliation: they were simply states of paralysing melancholy, of infinite sad reflexion, in which he felt how in this world of effort and suffering life was endurable, the spirit able to expand, only in the best conditions, and how a sordid struggle in which one should go down to the grave without having tasted them was not worth the misery it would cost, the dull demoralisation it would involve. (1)

James draws a clear distinction between Robinson's feeling of deprivation and the greedy envy of some of his fellow conspirators. Because his reaction is not based on petty jealousy but on an intense admiration for what he has missed, he is nauseated by Poupin's revolutionary talk:

Everywhere, everywhere he saw the ulcer of envy - the greed of a party hanging together only that it might despoil another to its advantage. (2)

Allusions are frequently made by James to Robinson's isolation from his fellow-revolutionaries, an isolation based, partly, on his own sense of superiority to them. Their discussions are often crude, limited to assertions of a few bold platitudes and to their personal experiences. The dialogue which James creates for them makes Robinson's contempt understandable:

There was plenty of palaver at "The Sun and Moon"; there were nights when a blast of imbecility seemed to blow over the place and one felt ashamed to be associated with so much crude fatuity and flat-faced vanity. (3)

(1) Ibid., book I, ch.xi.

(2) Ibid., book IV, ch.xxxi.

(3) Ibid., book II, ch.xxi.

Although it later becomes clear that this is not the real nerve-centre of the movement, it is the level at which the ordinary working man is involved, and it constitutes the only direct representation in the novel of a group of working men. There is one moment in Robinson's contact with the men at "The Sun and Moon", when, after a worthwhile discussion, he is filled with a "breath of popular passion"; but usually he shows little sense of solidarity with the working people who share his deprivation. As the Princess says to Mr. Vetch:

"The misery of the people is by no means always (1)
on his heart."

James says that in Robinson's moments of melancholy:

...his brothers of the people fared, collectively, very ill at his hands; their function then was to represent in massive shape precisely the grovelling interests which attracted one's contempt, and the only acknowledgment one owed them was for (2)
the completeness of the illustration.

Several times James mentions Robinson's reaction to the conditions in which "his brothers of the people" lived and worked; and there is no evidence from these allusions that he was interested in or concerned about their circumstances from a social reformer's point of view. Fear and offence to his delicate sensitivities are mingled in his shrinking from scenes of misery and degradation:

He hated the taste of liquor and still more the taste of the places where it was sold; besides which the types of misery and vice that one was liable to see collected in them frightened and harrowed him, made him ask himself questions that pierced the deeper because they were met by no answer. It was both a blessing and a drawback to him that the delicate, charming character

(1) Ibid., book IV, ch. xxxi.

(2) Ibid., book I, ch. xi.

of the work he did at old Crook's, under Eustace Poupin's influence, was a kind of education of the taste, trained him in the finest discriminations, in the recognition of the rare and the hatred of the cheap. This made the brutal, garish stodgy decoration of public-houses, with their deluge of gas-light, their glittering brass and pewter, their lumpish woodwork and false colours, detestable to him. (1)

The reference at the beginning of this passage to Robinson's fear suggests that he had nothing of the revolutionary's bold confidence in the possibility of amelioration; and James later makes explicit the despair of humanity which afflicted the young artisan at times:

There were nights when everyone he met appeared to reek with gin and filth and he found himself elbowed by figures as foul as lepers. Some of the women and girls in particular were appalling - saturated with alcohol and vice, brutal, bed-ragged, obscene. "What remedy but another deluge, what alchemy but annihilation?" he asked himself as he went his way; and he wondered what fate there could be in the great scheme of things for a planet overgrown with such vermin, what redemption but to be hurled against a ball of consuming fire. (2)

Each of the two contrasted figures of the Princess and Millicent embodies both a pull towards the revolutionary movement and a stronger force in the opposite directions. Hyacinth's responses to the European cities he visits and to the streets of his native city also illustrate the complexities of his pattern of loyalties.

The Princess's representative rôle is suggested when she is described on the occasion of her first meeting with Robinson:

(1) Ibid., book I, ch.x.

(2) Ibid., book V, ch.xxxviii.

That head, where two or three diamond stars glittered in the thick, delicate hair which defined its shape, suggested to Hyacinth something antique and celebrated, something he had admired of old - the memory was vague (1) - in a statue, in a picture, in a museum.

She is clearly associated with the world of art, and with an established tradition. She and her surroundings embody a fundamental assumption in the "argument" of The Princess Casamassima, that artistic beauty, the culture of the fine arts, the quintessence of civilization, is the creation and heritage of the aristocracy of the past and the finer spirits among the contemporary aristocracy. (2) The notion of the aristocracy as the source of the patronage which has created the artistic heritage is brought alive in the novel by Robinson's acting as the Princess's bookbinder, until, as she becomes increasingly embroiled in revolutionary Socialism, she begins to find such patronage irrelevant. The ideal which Robinson worships is the Princess outside her revolutionary involvement; her increasing absorption in it makes him feel that she is, unwittingly, letting him down. His and the Princess's attitudes to the Socialist movement are delicately balanced. Her attitudes are personal, self-regarding; and there is a hint of expediency in her claim:

(1) Ibid., book II, ch.xiii.

(2) The qualification implied in the phrase "finer spirits" is necessary because of the presence of Captain Sholto, who represents another element of the upper classes, the decadent, and another facet of taste, the meretricious. He is "one of those odd figures produced by old societies that have run to seed - corrupt and exhausted civilizations." (Book III, ch.xxxvi.) In contrast to the Princess's home, Captain Sholto's lodgings are filled with "the ingenuities of modern taste." (Book II, ch.xvi.)

"...I want to know à quoi m'en tenir. Are we on the eve of great changes or are we not? Is everything that's gathering force underground, in the dark, in the night, in little hidden rooms, out of sight of governments and policemen and idiotic "statesmen" - heaven save them! - is all this going to burst forth some fine morning and set the world on fire? Or is it to sputter out and spend itself in vain conspiracies, be dissipated in sterile heroisms and abortive isolated movements? I want to know à quoi m'en tenir..." (1)

There seems to be little rationality or objectivity in the Princess's behaviour and attitudes, especially when she indiscriminately bestows alms on poor people in the slums which she visits with Robinson, a mode of behaviour more consistent with the aristocratic philanthropy of Lady Aurora Langrish:

The Princess was an embodied passion - she was not a system: and her behaviour, after all, was more addressed to relieving herself than to relieving others. (2)

There is a dilettante quality about her, as Robinson half admits to himself when he visits her in her country retreat at Medley:

...it added much to the way life practised on his sense of the tragi-comical to think of the Princess's having retired to a private paradise to think out the problem of the slums. (3)

But, although the motives of the Princess do not speak loudly for the cause which she ostensibly embraces, the existence of a character such as Captain Sholto gives credibility to her attitudes and makes Robinson's regrets for what the revolution will destroy seem naïve.

(1) Ibid., book I, ch.xiii.

(2) Ibid., book V, ch.xxxviii.

(3) Ibid., book III, ch.xxii.

The conflict within Robinson is epitomized for him in the ambivalence both of people such as the Princess, and also of places. Paris, with Venice and Milan, represents the fullest flowering of a culture whose destruction he views with disgust; but blowing through Paris is the spirit of the French Revolution and of the 1871 Commune. London is also ambivalent to Robinson. Its streets reflect the misery from which he personally shrinks, and to the elimination of which he is supposedly dedicated; but it also constitutes an exhilarating richness and variety:

...the influences of the hour were such as to make the excursion very agreeable to our young man, who liked the streets at all times, but especially at nightfall in the autumn, of a Saturday, when in the vulgar districts the smaller shops and open-air industries were doubly active, and big clumsy torches flared and smoked over handcarts and costermongers' barrows drawn up in the gutters. Hyacinth had roamed through the great city since he was an urchin, but his imagination never ceased to be stirred by the preparations for Sunday that went on in the evening among the toilers and spinners, his brothers and sisters, and he lost himself in all the quickened crowding and pushing and staring at lighted windows and chaffering at the stalls of fishmongers and hucksters. (1)

Unlike Millicent, Robinson does not feel drawn only to the respectable streets. The difference between these two characters and their relationship with each other are also significant in illuminating the conflicting impulses within Robinson himself. Although Millicent comes from a feckless working-class family and has spent her early years

(1) Ibid., book I, ch.v.

in poverty and squalor, she has attained a respectable position in a shop, demonstrating gowns. Because she already believes that a measure of self-help enables anyone to rise above uncongenial circumstances, as she had done in her own life, she is no advocate of revolution:

The Princess wanted to destroy society and (1)
Millicent to uphold it.

Robinson is not only stirred by the richness of life in London, which he sees, momentarily, as "the richest expression of the life of man"; he is also drawn increasingly to Millicent who "represents" London, and who stands for the preservation of a society which, because of its very inequalities, allows scope to those who have the enterprise and determination to climb out of the abyss. Yet Millicent, too, unwittingly betrays him. When, in his desperation shortly before he commits suicide, he seeks her in the shops where she works, he finds Captain Sholto before him, posing as a customer, with Millicent's connivance. Millicent's vulgar ambition and failure of perception extend to her choice of lover; in this too perhaps she epitomizes the people of London.

Hyacinth Robinson seems more of a sensitive instrument than a human being in his own right, in that his experiences embody an anxiety about a threat to James's conception of culture by Socialism in its most extreme form. Only two paths seem to be open to society - maintaining the status quo, with the mitigating influences of a certain amount of

(1) Ibid., book V, ch.xli.

social mobility and aristocratic philanthropy, or revolution which will destroy the culture of a traditionally hierarchical civilization. No other alternatives are admitted, and within the novel that which is threatened is more vividly presented than the miseries of the lives of the people on whose behalf the threat to civilization is made.

(11) Richard Mutimer

Gissing's Demos, which is sub-titled A Story of English Socialism, draws many of its characters, ideas and events from contemporary political life.⁽¹⁾ The relationship between Mutimer's Union and Roodhouse's splinter group is like that between the SDF and the Socialist League, formed in 1884 by a group of former SDF members, led by William Morris and Eleanor Marx. Like the Socialist leaders Burns and Mann, both working men, Mutimer loses his job because he is engaged in Socialist activities. An issue much debated among Socialists in the 1880s was whether to put up candidates for Parliament; Mutimer's attempt to win a seat takes place in the context of such a debate. The New Wanley scheme does not seem to have been modelled on a particular contemporary enterprise, but it is based on two sets of ideas which were in the Socialist air at the time

(1) Gissing attended Socialist meetings while he was gathering material for Demos. In a letter to his sister Ellen, written on 22 November 1885, he says: And now I am obliged to go about attending Socialist meetings. Tonight I go to one at the house of the poet Morris in Hammersmith. (Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family, edited by Algernon and Ellen Gissing, London, 1927, p. 174).

when Gissing was writing: its internal organization, with short working hours, good homes and compulsory free education, resembles the SDF's plans for "interim measures" before a complete Socialist takeover of the means of production; and the siting of the New Wanley community on land formerly belonging to the landed gentry owes much to the basic idea of Henry George's land scheme, set out in Progress and Poverty, which was first published in England in 1880 and of which 109,000 copies had been sold in a cheap edition in Britain by 1890.

However, the apparent topicality and use of particularities should not be too strongly emphasized. There is no precise equivalence between real and fictional people and situations. For example, although Westlake resembles William Morris, it is Roodhouse, not Westlake, who carries out Morris's rôle in the novel by leading a breakaway group. For Socialists of the 1880s the threatened confrontation was that between the urban proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Whether he intended it or not, Gissing creates a sharper contrast between a member of the urban working classes (Mutimer) and a landowner and aesthete (Eldon). The centre of interest in the book is the character of Richard Mutimer, who represents not simply a working man committed to Socialism, but also a class of people whose power and influence will be advanced by Socialist success. He typifies not the artisan as he was when Gissing wrote Demos, but the artisan as he might become, given continued improvement in the physical conditions of the working classes. In fact Gissing says that he represents the qualities of his class "too favourably

to make him anything but an exception" in his time. (1)

He possesses "the best qualities his class can show". (2)

But, although he is an educated working man, Mutimer has no intellectual depth, as his choice of reading shows:

Social, political, religious, - under these three heads the volumes classed themselves, and each class was represented by productions of the "extreme" school...

A library of pathetic significance, the individual alone considered. Viewed as representative, not without alarming suggestiveness to those who can any longer trouble themselves about the world's future. One dreams of an age when free thought - in the popular sense - will have become universal, when art shall have lost its meaning, worship its holiness, when the Bible will only exist in "comic" editions, and Shakespeare be downcried by "most sweet voices" as a mountebank (3) of reactionary tendencies.

This is startling in the light of the tradition in nineteenth-century fiction of distinguishing the earnest, thoughtful working man from his fellows by virtue of the fact that he reads and pursues his own studious interests. The tradition embraces such characters as Job Legh in Mary Barton, Morley in Sybil, Alton Locke, Felix Holt, and, in Gissing's own novels, Samuel Tollady in Workers in the Dawn and Gilbert Graill in Thyrza. Details of lives of working men of the nineteenth century suggest that Gissing is making a questionable assumption by implying that Mutimer's choice of reading was the best that could be expected of a working man. Cooper's reading included works by Virgil, Milton and Wordsworth, and

(1) Gissing, Demos (London, 1886), ch. iv.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., ch. v.

Strauss's Leben Jesu.⁽¹⁾

Mutimer is also a philistine. A utilitarian/aesthetic polarity is created by Gissing's conception of the New Wanley works as both devoid of man-made beauty and destructive of natural beauty. The dichotomy is reinforced by the creation of Hubert Eldon, an aesthete who tears down the New Wanley works in order to restore the valley to its former state, regardless of how many workers suffer in the process. It is Eldon who describes Mutimer as "'openly exultant; he stood for Demos grasping the sceptre,'" and who sees Demos as inimical to both nature and art:

"...with nature will perish art. What has a (2)
hungry Demos to do with the beautiful?"

At the time when Gissing was writing Demos William Morris was propagating a Socialist ideal which weakens the force of Gissing's suggestion that Socialism combined with philistine utilitarianism, and Conservatism with aestheticism were two central dispositions of attitudes. That Gissing found it difficult to believe that Socialism could be reconciled with a love of beauty is indicated by a comment he made to his brother about Morris's involvement in a disturbance created by some members of the Socialist League in 1885:

...what the devil is such a man doing in that galley?...Why cannot he write poetry in the shade? He will inevitably coarsen himself in the company of ruffians.

(1) Cooper, op.cit., pp. 57-66.

(2) Demos, ch.vii.

Keep apart, keep apart, and preserve one's soul alive - that is the teaching for the day. It is ill to have been born in these times, but one can make a world within the world. (1)

Mutimer's class attitudes and social relations are vitiated by his lack of "a capacity for culture", a phrase used by Gissing in the specific sense of a respect for social superiors. It is a characteristic which his Conservative uncle possessed:

Remaining the sturdiest of Conservatives, he bowed in sincere humility to those very claims which the Radical most angrily disallows: birth, hereditary station, recognised gentility - these things made the strongest demand upon his reverence. Such an attitude was a testimony to his own capacity for culture, since he knew not the meaning of vulgar adulation, and did in truth perceive the beauty of those qualities to which the uneducated iconoclast is totally blind. (2)

Expressed thus, Gissing's equations favour the Conservative, not the Radical. Mutimer sees the middle and upper classes as the repositories of wealth and its symbols, which he covets. He has no desire to remain tied to his class, and his bourgeois aspirations cause him to become increasingly hypocritical and unscrupulous. The theoretical worthiness of Mutimer's plans for his workpeople at New Wanley is not called in question; what is dubious is the personal worth of a Socialist who, because of the accident of wealth, makes one rule for his workmen and another for himself. Gissing comments ironically:

What was the use of wealth if it did not exempt one from the petty laws binding on miserable hand-to-mouth toilers! (3)

(1) Gissing's Letters to His Family, Letter to his brother, 22 September, 1885, p. 169.

(2) Demos, ch.iii.

(3) Ibid., ch.xviii.

Mutimer is not therefore disturbed by any sense of inconsistency when he drinks wine himself, while insisting that there should be no public-house in Wanley, in order to ensure that the population lives soberly. By his treatment of the characters of Dabbs and Rodman Gissing generalizes within the working classes the greed which overrides principles. Daniel Dabbs is less ardent about his Socialist ideals when he comes into wealth; and the quietly competent Socialist engineer, Rodman, is finally exposed as a dishonest opportunist. (1)

Although Gissing does not confine "strong instincts of domination" to working-class leaders, he does show Mutimer developing towards what he describes as "crude tyranny":

In a character such as Mutimer's there will almost certainly be found a disposition to cruelty, for strong instincts of domination, even of the nobler kind, only wait for circumstances to develop crude tyranny - the cruder, of course, in proportion to the lack of native or acquired refinement which distinguishes the man. (2)

The link between Mutimer's "disposition to cruelty" and that of the working classes as a whole is made in two ways. A manifestation of the brutish in his relationship with his wife makes us aware of the similarity between him and 'Arry, whose veneer of civilization is very thin:

A recent acquisition was a heavy-looking ring on the little finger of his right hand. Had you been of his intimates, 'Arry would have explained to you the double advantage of this ring; not

(1) Cf. James, op.cit., book IV, ch.xxxi:
Everywhere, everywhere he saw the ulcer of envy...

(2) Demos, ch.xxiii.

only did it serve as an adornment, but, as playful demonstration might indicate, it would prove of singular efficacy in pugilistic conflict. (1)

Gissing's hints about the potential violence of "Demos" are resolved into something explicit in the episode in which Mutimer himself is killed by the mob. (2) Such a pattern speaks of Gissing's pessimism, of which there is evidence as early as 1882. In October of that year he had formulated his pessimism in an article, 'Hope of Pessimism', which he did not publish. In it he substituted Schopenhauer for Comte as the philosopher with whose social vision he was most in harmony. (3)

Gissing's fears about the decline in standards of behaviour and cultivation in a democratic society, which underlie his treatment of Socialism in Demos, are expressed in a letter written in May 1892 to his friend Eduard Bertz:

I want to deal with the flood of blackguardism which nowadays is pouring forth over the society which is raised by wealth above the lowest and yet is not sufficiently educated to rank with the highest. Impossible to take up a newspaper without being impressed with this fact of extending and deepening Vulgarities... Society is being levelled down, and with strange rapidity. Democracy scarcely pretends to a noble aim; it is triumphing by the force of its appeal to lower motives. Thus, I am convinced, the gulf between the really refined and the masses grows, and will grow, constantly wider. Before long we shall have an Aristocracy of mind and manners more distinct from the vast majority of the population than Aristocracy has ever been in England. It will not be a fighting Aristocracy, but retiring and reticent; scornful, hopeless. (4)

(1) Ibid., ch.ix.

(2) This episode may be based on the riot which occurred at an SDF meeting in Trafalgar Square in February, 1886.

(3) For details of the changes in his attitude to Positivism, see his Letters to His Family, pp. 92 and 120 (both letters to his brother).

(4) The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, edited by Arthur C. Young (London, 1961), 1 May, 1892, pp. 151-2.

Several of the terms used here are applicable to Mutimer: he is "raised by wealth above the lowest and yet is not sufficiently educated to rank with the highest"; he shows vulgarity; he becomes dominated by "lower motives". In his characterization of Mutimer, Gissing has submerged the individual in the general. All representative characters have to bear the weight of generalization, but Mutimer has to bear too much: his attitudes and behaviour too overtly illustrate a thesis. Moreover, the thesis reflects both contemptuous and defeatist attitudes, with a strong suggestion of retreat into the aloofness implied in the exhortation:

Keep apart, keep apart, and preserve one's soul⁽¹⁾ alive.

(iii) The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

A major difference between The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists and the other novels examined in this chapter is that the political beliefs of the protagonist, Frank Owen, a Socialist, are identical with those of the author, Robert Tressell.⁽²⁾ In his preface Tressell denies that he is writing a treatise or an essay on Socialism:

My main object was to write a readable story full of human interest and based on the

(1) Gissing's letters show that, after the publication of Workers in the Dawn, there was a growing separation in his consciousness between art and social reform, and an increasingly strong adherence to art for art's sake. See his Letters to His Family, p. 126 (letter to his sister Margaret) and pp. 138-9 (letter to his brother).

(2) Robert Tressell was the pseudonym of Robert Noonan.

happenings of everyday life, the subject of (1)
Socialism being treated incidentally.

In fact the daily lives of the Mugsborough workpeople and their families illustrate an important part of Tressell's political thesis: they show the conditions created by the poverty and unemployment which he sees as the lot of the working man under capitalism. (2) His book includes people of all ages because he wished "to describe how the workers are circumstanced at all periods of their lives, from the cradle to the grave": (3) its emphasis is best conveyed by another prefatory statement of intention:

I designed to show the conditions resulting from poverty and unemployment: to expose the futility of the measures taken to deal with them and to indicate what I believe to be the only real remedy, namely - Socialism. I intended to explain what Socialists understand by the word "Poverty": to define the Socialist theory of the causes of poverty, and to explain how Socialists propose to abolish (4) poverty.

-
- (1) Robert Tressell, The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (London, 1914), preface. The 1914 edition was edited and abridged by Jessie Pope. In 1955 Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. published a full text, edited by F.C. Ball. All quotations are from the latter.
- (2) Mugsborough, presented by Tressell as a typical South of England town, is based on Hastings, where there was evidence of widespread poverty during the later Edwardian period. For the information about its poverty I am indebted to Dr. G.A. Jones, who examined Hastings parish magazines and church records and the Hastings Conservative and Unionist Association minute books in the research for her unpublished doctoral thesis, presented at Sussex University in 1965, Local and National Issues in Politics: a study of the elections of 1906 and 1910, with specific reference to constituencies in Lancashire and East Sussex.
- (3) Tressell, op.cit., preface.
- (4) Ibid.

Owen's Socialist "sermons" to his fellow-workers are supported by the details of the narrative and by Tressell's own comments on political issues; and the author's presentation of and authorial comments on other individuals and groups in the novel coincide with Owen's opinions. In this section I shall present the evidence for my assertions, and examine the effects on Tressell's characterization of Owen.

Fundamental to Tressell's account of the social system is the definition of poverty which Owen puts forward:

"'Poverty'...consists in a shortage of the necessaries of life. When those things are so scarce or so dear that people are unable to obtain sufficient of them to satisfy their needs, those (1) people are in a condition of poverty."

The people who are short of the necessaries of life are those who supply both necessaries and luxuries by their labour: because the money they earn in wages is not equal in value to the commodities they have produced, they find that they are able to buy back only a small part. Tressell's incursions into the domestic lives of his working men reveal the difficulties they experience in buying even the necessities. Easton and his wife have to take in a lodger to help them to make ends meet; Harlow and his wife manage to clothe their children respectably only because Mrs. Harlow works hard as a seamstress and her husband grows vegetables, some of which he is able to sell; and Mary Linden collapses from

(1) Ibid., ch.vii.

fatigue, undernourishment and starvation. Tressell points out that the workman cannot look forward to an amelioration of his lot:

In the majority of cases, for a workman there is no hope of advancement. After he has learnt his trade and become a "journeyman" all progress ceases. He is at the goal. After he has been working ten or twenty years he commands no more than he did at first - a bare living wage - sufficient money to purchase fuel to keep the human machine working. (1)

Owen specifies two major causes of poverty. One is the payment of rent by the majority to a minority of land- and property-owners:

"In the case of the working classes the rent absorbs at the lowest possible estimate, about one-third of their total earnings, for it must be remembered that the rent is an expense that goes on all the time, whether they are employed or not." (2)

The significance of the rent as a drain on a family's resources is exemplified in the hardships of a number of characters, including the Eastons, the Newmans, and Mary Linden. The second major cause of poverty particularized by Owen is the proliferation of employers of labour, each of whom is in competition with others for a share of the market. The dominance of the profit motive in a free-enterprise economy means that, contrary to the tenets of nineteenth-century political economy, the interests of the workers and employers are not identical because there is

(1) Ibid., ch.xxiii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xv.

unrestrained competition, each employer has to fight for custom in order to make a profit, work is scamped, and the workers are sweated. This is illustrated in the central situation of the novel, that which obtains in Rushton's business; and it evokes a comment from Tressell which reinforces the analysis Owen has already made:

The trouble was that there were too many "masters". It would have been far better for the workmen if nine out of every ten of the employers had never started business. Then the others would have been able to get a better price for their work, and the men might have had better wages and conditions. (1)

Owen points out that one result of this competitiveness among employers is poor quality work by their employees:

"He wants them to do two days' work for one day's pay. The result is that a job which - if it were done properly - would employ say twenty men for two months, is rushed and scamped in half that time with half that number of men." (2)

The "scamping" is illustrated frequently in the novel, but most notably by the dismissal of Newman for working in too painstaking a fashion. The implications of Owen's emphasis on the ills of competitiveness are summed up as a comment by Tressell in his authorial voice:

...all who live under the present system practise selfishness, more or less. We must be selfish: the System demands it. We must be selfish or we shall be hungry and ragged and finally die in the gutter. The more selfish we are the better we shall be. In the "Battle of Life" only the selfish and cunning are able to survive: all others are beaten down and trampled under foot. (3)

(1) Ibid., ch.xliii.

(2) Ibid., ch.xv.

(3) Ibid., ch.xi.

The novel is based on the related assumptions that the social system created by a particular political organization determines people's behaviour, that it should be changed from the corrupt Capitalist to the Socialist, and that it is changeable. People are therefore judged according to the strength of their determination to change the system. This criterion is the basis of one of the novel's major distinctions, that between Owen and his fellow-workmen; and Owen's observations match Tressell's authorial comments on dramatic presentations of the workmen's attitudes. Tressell's main contention about Rushton's employees, the "philanthropists", is that they are not interested in and know little about Socialism. This is apparent from the conversations which take place during the breaks in their work, when Owen advocates Socialism and tries to rouse them from their apathy. Owen feels that such apathy is the major obstacle to the development of Socialist influence:

They were the enemy. Those who not only quietly submitted like so many cattle to the existing state of things, but defended it, and opposed and ridiculed any suggestion to alter it.

They were the real oppressors - the men who spoke of themselves as "The likes of us", who, having lived in poverty and degradation all their lives considered that what had been good enough for them was good enough for the children they⁽¹⁾ had been the cause of bringing into existence.

Tressell illustrates Owen's point by presenting the workers throughout the book as a group of people who show unquestioning and misplaced loyalty to those more exalted than themselves,

(1) Ibid., ch.ii. Owen's attitude is similar to that of Ewan Tavendale in Lewis Grassie Gibbon's Grey Granite (1934). See Appendix IV.

from the remote in the established hierarchy - members of the Royal Family - to the immediate, their own employer Rushton, who is nauseatingly fêted at their annual "beano."

Tressell develops his point about the conservatism and political apathy of working men by suggesting that they show no sense of the need for, and do not support, individuals and organizations whose primary aim is to further their interests. The only Mugsborough councillor who shows informed concern for the welfare of working people, Dr. Weakling, is seen as an enemy⁽¹⁾; working men do not support Labour Members of Parliament⁽²⁾; they do not make use of the protection afforded to them by trade unionism:

Ninety-nine out of every hundred of them did not believe in such things as those: they had much more sense than to join Trades Unions: on the contrary, they believed in placing themselves entirely at the mercy of their good, kind Liberal⁽³⁾ and Tory masters.

Some of their attitudes reflect strong prejudices against Socialism. Slyme, for example, equates it with Atheism, Materialism and Free Love.

Tressell's observations on the soi-disant Christians in the community also coincide with Owen's. The narrative several times points to the hypocrisy of most of the leading

-
- (1) The name Dr. Weakling signifies that, in Tressell's words, "When he saw something going forwards that he did not think was right, he protested and voted againsts it and then - he collapsed!" (Ch.xx).
 - (2) In 1906 there were 30 Labour M.P.s; in January 1910, 40; and in December 1910, 42.
 - (3) Tressell, op.cit., ch.xliii.

"Christians", who fail to counteract the ill effects of the social system: Tressell's main attack is directed against the discrepancy between preaching and practice, rather than at the habit of cultivating an image of respectability by ostentatiously attending church. Mr. Belcher preaches asceticism but dies a bloated death in Monte Carlo; Hunter and Rushton advocate charity but treat the "philanthropists" as a sweated labour.⁽¹⁾ Owen's perception of the Mugsborough Christians supplements Tressell's narrative with a gloss:

"It is these pretended Christians who do not practise what they preach, because, all the time, they are singing their songs of Brotherhood and Love, they are fighting with each other, and strangling each other, and trampling each other under foot in their horrible 'Battle of Life'!"⁽²⁾

Tressell also sees Christianity as confirming and reinforcing subservience through education. He says of the majority of working people:

It seemed as if they regarded their own children with a kind of contempt, as being only fit to grow up to be the servants of the children of such people as Rushton and Sweater. But it must be remembered that they had been taught self-contempt when they were children. In the so-called "Christian" schools they attended then they were taught to "order themselves lowly and reverently towards their betters", and they were now actually sending their own children to learn the same degrading lessons in their turn!⁽³⁾

(1) Tressell presents the Rev. John Starr as a man of loving concern, but also as someone responsible for bolstering up the evil social, political and economic system by flattering men such as Rushton and Sweater and condoning their practices.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxv.

(3) Ibid., ch.xxi.

The use of Owen as a mouthpiece for the author's views in a propagandist novel has resulted in some weaknesses of characterization. His character has been schematically conceived to enable Tressell to draw an item-by-item contrast between Owen and his fellow-workmen. The differences in their political outlook constitute the major item in the contrast; but they are also compared through their attitudes to their employer and his manager. Most of the men are content if they can avoid antagonizing Rushton and Hunter, but Owen is prepared to risk losing his job for his convictions, a risk which he takes when he complains to Hunter about Bert White's working conditions. Unlike many of his fellow workmen, Owen has not allowed environmental pressures to tempt him to drink, but his teetotalism is different from that of Slyme, who represents the religious convert among working men:

This young man had been through some strange process that he called "conversion." He had had a "change of 'art" and looked down with pious pity upon those he called "worldly" people. He was not "worldly", he did not smoke or drink and never went to the theatre. He had an extraordinary notion that total abstinence was one of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. It never occurred to what he called his mind, that this doctrine is an insult to the Founder of Christianity. (1)

-
- (1) Ibid., ch.i. There is uncertainty in Tressell's presentation of the working men's drinking habits. He suggests at one point that environmental pressures drive men to drink and uses Easton's way of life as exemplification. However, an earlier defence of the working man incorporates what reads like a reply to an imaginary attack on their fecklessness, particularly on their habit of spending money on drinking:

There were a very large proportion of them who did not spend even a shilling a week for drink; and there were numerous others who, while not being formally total abstainers, yet often went for weeks together without entering a public house or tasting intoxicating drink in any form. (Ch.xliii.)

Sometimes Tressell seems to be presenting Owen in more human terms. For example, in his domestic life he behaves with the kind of inconsistency which makes him appear human and credible, not the inconsistency which derives from an ill thought-out conception of his character on the author's part. Despite his hostility to Christianity, Owen allows his son to go to Sunday School, as Frankie's friends Charley and Elsie Linden do. However, even when a more human side of Owen's character is in evidence, not far beneath the surface is the contrast between him and the other philanthropists which is usually related to their attitudes to Socialism and is systematically pursued. We have the impression that Tressell is presenting him as a sentient and complex human being when he shows Owen's embarrassment because he does not sense the supportive interest of his fellow-employees in his explanation of the evils of the Money System. However, it soon becomes apparent that Tressell is using the details of Owen's reaction to draw attention to the men's apathy and boorishness:

An absolute, disconcerting silence reigned. His embarrassment and nervousness increased. He knew that they were unwilling to hear or talk or think about such subjects as the cause of poverty at all. They preferred to make fun of and ridicule⁽¹⁾ them.

Sometimes we are aware in Tressell's characterization of Owen of an incomplete distinction between the man and the political commentator. One of the most noticeable instances is the evaluation of Jack Linden after his dismissal from Rushton's early in the novel's chain of events. Linden is

(1) Ibid., ch.xxv.

one of the most reactionary of Rushton's workmen, but his age to some extent accounts for the conservatism of his views; and the treatment he receives from Rushton and Hunter evokes our sympathy without requiring us to suppress an awareness of his too-ready acceptance of bullying by authority. Frank Owen's comment on him, presented without demur by Tressell, seems to tip the balance the wrong way; and it is expressed in a stilted manner in the phraseology of doctrinaire Socialism:

"As for Linden and his wife, although of course one can't help feeling sorry for them, at the same time there's no getting away from the fact that they deserve to suffer. All their lives they've been working like brutes and living in poverty. Although they have done more than their fair share of work, they have never enjoyed anything like a fair share of the things they have helped to produce. And yet, all their lives they have supported and defended the system that robbed them, and have resisted and ridiculed every proposal to alter it. It's wrong to feel for such people; they deserve (1) to suffer."

Of the political working men discussed, only Hyacinth Robinson is not in some way sacrificed as a character to the political import of the novel. Even Felix Holt is portrayed with occasional crudities. Locke and Gerard are not convincing as Chartists; Mutimer is too generalized, and has to bear most of the weight of Gissing's anti-democratic sentiments. Tressell distinguishes between the working man and

(1) Ibid., ch.vi.

the Socialist and makes his Socialist working man a lonely figure in his class; but Owen is idealized and presented too overtly as one element in a schematic contrast with other workers. He is thus somewhat diminished as a character, and in consequence a less effective mouthpiece than he might be for Tressell's political views.

There is a working-class threat in all these novels, but there are differences in the nature of the threat from one book to another. In Sybil and Alton Locke there is a manifest danger of irresponsible violence, embodied in Kelly and his companions in Kingsley's novel and "Bishop" Hatton and the Hell-cats in Disraeli's (although Disraeli praises the impressive orderliness of the Chartist ranks). There is a frightenly mindless outburst of violence in Felix Holt, but George Eliot, following Comte, sees the ignorance rather than the subversive intentions of the majority as the cause of the danger. Although violence is also a threat in The Princess Casamassima and in Demos, there is also a new stress in the importance attached to fears of the spread of philistinism, though James's novel creates a stronger sense of the dilemma of the cultured Radical than does Demos. In The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists the threat from the working classes affects not the established order but Socialism, which is endangered by the ignorance and apathy of the majority.

CONCLUSION

Since this thesis has taken the form of a survey, it would be unwise to try to squeeze all the material into "patterns". However, some preoccupations and methods of handling them cut across chapters. The concluding section will, therefore, begin with a summary of the major points related to two concerns which predominate in the novels I have discussed - the threat to human scale and humane values in society, and the awareness of the importance of accommodating working-class groups into existing moral values or even of re-thinking personal and social moral codes. I shall then comment on the selection and handling of material in order to try to establish what constitutes valid selection and where there is evasion in the fictional treatment of working-class life.

HUMAN SCALE AND HUMANE VALUES

The evils of urban living include the threat to human dignity of bad physical conditions, such as those experienced by the Davenports in Mary Barton, by many of the families described in Dives and Lazarus, and by Mrs. Trollope's Widow Armstrong, among many others. It is not only the facts of overcrowding and poor sanitation which cause concern: diminished contact with the natural world is a loss both to physical and spiritual well-being. Mrs. Tonna sees a direct connection between contact with nature and moral wholesomeness. Dickens' perception in Hard Times is more subtle and complex. The

implications of the loss of fellowship with nature⁽¹⁾ are worked out through an exploration of the complex relations between what is natural and unnatural in education in social organization, and in habits of thought. The position of the working-classes in Dickens' analysis is made clear in the passage which leads to the introduction of Stephen Blackpool:

In the hardest working part of Coketown; in the innermost fortifications of that ugly citadel, where Nature was as strongly bricked out as killing airs and gases were bricked in; at the heart of the labyrinth of narrow courts upon courts, and close streets upon streets, which had come into existence piecemeal, every piece in a violent hurry for some one man's purpose, and the whole an unnatural family, shouldering and trampling, and pressing one another to death; ...among the multitude of Coketown, generically called "the Hands", - a race who would have found more favour with some people, if Providence had seen fit to make them only hands, or, like the lower creatures of the seashore, only hands and stomachs - lived a certain Stephen Blackpool, forty⁽²⁾ years of age.

For Dickens the most serious aspect of the loss of contact with Nature is the effect on the habits of thought of the "controllers". The passage quoted above ends with the figure of Stephen Blackpool, who is a victim both of the mechanization of production and, more significantly, of the mechanization of thought into systems such as utilitarianism. The physical characteristics of Coketown are, therefore, a symptom of the predominant ethos, not a cause of the demoralization of the town's inhabitants.

The possibility of the establishment of community within an urban environment is a concern of writers throughout

(1) This is one of Ruskin's concerns in The Stones of Venice (1851-53).

(2) Dickens, Hard Times (London, 1854), book I, ch.x.

the period 1831-1914. Antithetical interpretations emerge in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth; they are comparable because each deals with the working-class environment within the city. For Morrison, Besant and Gissing, the working-class areas of London reflect no sense of community whereby individuals derive a positive and fruitful sense of identity from their rôle within a coherent group. The Cockney School of writers, on the other hand, suggests that there is a sense of fellowship and of belonging within working-class groups in London. Earlier in the period both Mrs. Gaskell and Disraeli emphasized the threat to the establishment of community of life in an urban environment, but Mrs. Gaskell particularly sees the threat as a result of the nature of industrial relations, not merely of the nature of urban living. As Mary Barton shows, there are horizontal relationships within the working classes, which foster a sense of community in a very positive way, by means of acts of hospitality and mutual helpfulness. However, the pattern of a traditional village community, with vertical as well as horizontal relations, is obliterated by the dominance of impersonal attitudes towards workpeople by employers. Although Morley's distinction in Sybil between aggregation and community is expressed in terms of the nature of urban life, it is worked out in the details of the book partly through industrial relations. Mr. Trafford's provisions for his workpeople derive from his conception of an ideal community, in which he performs the function of a benevolent paternalist who organizes

the community to serve the moral as well as the physical welfare of its inhabitants.

In Helen Fleetwood Mrs. Tonna articulates her feeling that factory work per se offers the operatives no source of satisfaction because of its monotony; but in most of the fictional treatments of work-relationships which I have examined, the workers are seen as victims of inhumane attitudes and types of behaviour deriving from competitive economics. English fiction, like English political life in the nineteenth century, eschewed revolutionary solutions, looking for hope to legislation or to the moral enlightenment of the entrepreneur. In one area of industrial life, trade unionism, the working classes are seen as the creators of an organization which is a threat to humane values partly because of its methods of engaging, or coercing, working-class support. (Tressell is rare in taking it for granted that trade unions are beneficial.) The main explicit objections to trade unionism are that they militate against freedom of conscience; and that, by virtue of their nature as mass organizations, they are movements in which the individual is submerged. Perhaps such emphases come only to those who are comfortably placed, socially and materially. Certainly fictional treatments of trade unionism, at least up to 1870, suggest an undercurrent of fear about their violent potential.

The novels and stories examined in this thesis constitute a developing search for a political morality which comes to terms with the existence of large urban and industrial working-class groups. In the early part of the period there is a streak of social conservatism in the writing of those

such as Kingsley and Disraeli, who concern themselves with political issues. The extension of the franchise, potential and actual, in 1867 evokes from George Eliot a plea to the working man to make himself a responsible and well-informed voter, although Felix Holt leaves unresolved a sense of the gap between the educated, serious-minded working man, such as Holt himself, and the majority of ignorant, easily-swayed workmen. The acquisition of the franchise and the extension of the provisions for education are at the base, in Tressell's novel, of a sustained expression of disillusionment about their effects on the workers' sense of the need to become politically informed. Both Gissing and James see philistinism rather than irresponsibility and intellectual paucity as the main danger in the establishment of a more democratic society through Socialism. Each sees democracy, according to the Socialist interpretation of the word, as inextricably bound to a process of levelling down, rather than in the terms which D.H. Lawrence uses to define his democratic ideal:

The true democracy is that in which a people gradually cumulate, from the vast base of the populace upwards through the zones of life and understanding to the summit where the great man, or the most perfect utterer is alone. (1)

Fiction throughout the period covered by this survey reflects frequent definitions and modifications of personal moral values in order to accommodate understanding of the working classes. Mrs. Gaskell epitomizes the Christian-

(1) D.H. Lawrence, Phoenix, edited by E.D. McDonald (London, 1936), p. 609.

humanitarian balance which predominated in the early Victorian period: mitigating circumstances are vividly realized, but notions of sinfulness are both precisely conceived and impartially applied. This attitude was modified in two ways in the works of mid- and late-nineteenth-century writers: Christianity ceased to provide the value-system; and environmentalist judgements took a firmer hold. Gissing uses words such as "sin" and "evil", but often to express a disguised revulsion, rather than to apply precisely the value-judgements stemming from Christian belief. In fact he sought in Comte and Schopenhauer the moral criteria which he applied to people and society. Environmentalist approaches to the working classes appeared in varying degrees and in a variety of manifestations. These include a recognition of toughness and resilience as significant positives in a slum environment; a tempering of conventionally harsh judgements against those such as prostitutes who offended against social and moral codes, sometimes leading to an original perception of virtues where only vice was previously thought to exist; and, in the attitudes of a writer such as Clarence Rook, a preference for detached, "sociological" observation. The recognition of the existence of a separate working-class culture, or a number of working-class cultures, contributed much to the formation of these more flexible attitudes.

An interesting and significant feature of the application of moral values to working-class characters is the development of a new concept of what is gentlemanly or noble, which is divorced from class. One clear expression

of the concept of the gentleman is to be found in Smiles's
Self Help:

The poor man may be a true gentleman - in spirit and in daily life. He may be honest, truthful, upright, polite, temperate, courageous, self-respecting, and self-helping - that is, be a true⁽¹⁾ gentleman.

In fact there are few fictional exemplifications of the precise combination of qualities Smiles enumerates here: the emphasis he places on self-help is played down by writers who wish to present the working man as a victim-figure. However, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, Dickens, Disraeli and Gissing in some of his characters, such as Kirkwood, subscribe to a concept of moral nobility which transcends class; and in the treatment of inter-class personal relationships several working-class women are accorded the moral purity and emotional sensitivity to make them a source of both stability and inspiration to middle-class husbands. Although late nineteenth-century writers, who saw working-class culture in terms of monotony and violence, make less of moral refinement, it still flickers in characters such as Badalia Herodsfoot and Liza Kemp.

SELECTION AND EVASION

A novelist who attaches a class label to his characters is presenting them as class representatives, and he runs the risk of being accused of misunderstanding, prejudice or sentimentality if he fails to define clearly the limits of their

(1) Smiles, Self Help (London, 1859), p. 367. Cf. Mr. Twemlow's oration in the last chapter of Our Mutual Friend: I beg to say that when I use the word gentleman, I use it in the sense in which the degree may be attained by any man.

representative functions. We should not expect to be faced with a representative working-class figure; because there are so many strata within the working classes, he could represent only a limited number of people to whom the term "working class" might be applicable, regardless of individuality. In this section of the conclusion I shall refer briefly to fictional contexts in which the selection of material about working-class characters and ways of life evokes the reader's confidence in the writer and may lead to valuable perceptions. I shall go on to suggest that the genre contains examples of unsatisfactory evasions.

We must beware of passing an adverse judgement on a writer on the grounds of what he has selected and emphasized for his picture of working-class life and people. The selection of material, whether conscious or otherwise, leads to the creation of an artefact which is the embodiment of the writer's vision of humanity. Although Mrs. Gaskell depicts weakness and irresponsibility in the Bouchers, and vice in the details of Esther's life and death, she eschews working-class characters who are repulsive and criminal. But her characters are no less "real" than Gissing's Clem Peckover or Kipling's Tom Herodsfoot; conversely, we are not justified in saying that Gissing has misrepresented the working classes in The Nether World simply because he has created a group composed primarily of weak or criminal figures. We have no cause of quarrel with the writer who clearly defines his characters and their settings and situations, so long as they are handled with logical consistency.

The presentation and initial selection may be affected by the requirements of moral and literary convention. Dickens presents the character of Nancy euphemistically, although he does not eschew the implications of her prostitution, just as Mrs. Gaskell does not pretend that the filth in the streets and courts round the Bartons' home does not exist, even though she avoids offending the sensibilities of her readers by describing it. Similarly, we cannot accuse Gissing and James of misrepresentation or myopia simply because they choose as their protagonists characters whose origins are unusual and not purely working-class: these act as interpreting consciousnesses mediating between the reader and the details of working-class life in the novels. James provides the rationale for the emphasis on the sensitive but rare working-class type in his preface to The Princess Casamassima. On the one hand the perceptions of such a character provide the reader with the means of extending his awareness:

...there are degrees of feeling - the muffled, the faint, the just sufficient, the barely intelligent, as we may say; and the acute, the intense, the complete, in a word - the power to be finely aware and richly responsible. It is those moved in this latter fashion who "get most" out of all that happens to them and who in so doing enable us, as readers of their record, as participators by a fond attention, (1) also to get most.

The second reason James adduces relates to the engagement of the reader's sympathetic interest:

We care, our curiosity and our sympathy care, comparatively little for what happens to the stupid, the coarse and the blind... (2)

(1) James, The Princess Casamassima (London, 1885-86), preface.

(2) Ibid.

In what circumstances, therefore, are we justified in claiming that a writer of fiction about working-class life has evaded issues? It may be that he defines the class context precisely and clearly but builds too much upon the foundations laid. Morrison successfully avoids this in A Child of the Jago: he does not move outside his assertion, made in the first chapter, that the Jago is presented to the reader as an instance of an exceptionally demoralized area. However, Mrs. Gaskell in North and South builds upon her belief in the value of personal contact between masters and men a theory about industrial relations which depends for its efficacy upon the co-operation, in a subordinate rôle, of the working classes. She seems to be indulging in special pleading by suggesting that others would regard John Thornton as Higgins does. Gissing, too, sometimes sinks the particular in the general, although in his writing it usually works in the direction of anti-working-class feeling. This is the case with the portrayal of Mutimer in Demos, as I have suggested in Chapter VII.

Sometimes a novelist appears to be choosing as a central character someone whose background is far removed from that of the majority of his readers. Dickens appears to be doing this with Lizzie Hexam in Our Mutual Friend, and Gissing in choosing a prostitute as his main female character in The Unclassed. However, the difficulties which might be involved in evoking our sympathies and in making the character's perceptions both convincing and interesting to us are overcome with the help of an evasion. The character's moral sensitivity

is accompanied by a refinement of manner which results in an unsatisfactory hiatus between character and background. This is particularly noticeable when, as is the case with Lizzie Hexam, the character's background remains prominent in the discussion about social issues.

Evasion of the implications for society of a situation or relationship involving one or more working-class characters sometimes indicates that a novelist has posited an ideal which it is difficult to absorb into existing reality, as shown in the book. These evasions take many forms. In Mary Barton Jem Wilson and Mary begin a new life together in Canada. Mrs. Gaskell leaves behind the theme of class conflict. Gissing indirectly acknowledges that he has posited an impossible ideal when he shows Egremont's prospect of married happiness with Thyrza thwarted by Thyrza's death. Sometimes the idealized nature of a character or relationship is convincing only because of an unusual context. In The Unclassed Gissing paves the way for the marriage of Ida and Waymark by creating in Waymark a character who fits into no particular class niche; and Wrayburn's marriage to Lizzie Hexam could take place only in the society of Our Mutual Friend, which contains so many upstarts and oddities.

Idealization is different from the sentimentality which may sometimes be found in the writings of the Cockney School. Idealization results from the type of attitude which Richard Hoggart described in The Uses of Literacy as a "positive over-expectation which one frequently finds among middle-class

intellectuals with strong social consciences".⁽¹⁾ Sentimentality blurs moral distinctions, so that we are lulled into missing important discriminations and the more serious implications of attitudes and behaviour are glossed over. The drunken working man is a figure of fun, not, as in Lawrence, a man pitiable because he loses his sensitivity and "denies the god in him", causing those close to him to suffer; not, as in Felix Holt, a man who disgraces his class and undermines its capacity for the responsible exercise of power. As I have suggested, the Cockney School of novelists did not write in a consistently sentimental manner; but their attempt to assert some of the positives of London working-class life, as opposed to the bleak negatives of Morrison and Kipling, sometimes led them to an evasion of the full implications of the attitudes and behaviour of the characters they created. There is a connection between some of their stories and the "realistic romances" of a writer such as James Greenwood, whose working-class urchins and criminals are intended to stimulate a frisson of excitement or horror, or lead to a gawping expression of wonder: the anti-social nature of behaviour thus becomes relatively unimportant.

(1) Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy (London, 1957), Penguin edition, p. 15.

APPENDIX IWorkhouses

Although the "Bastille" is a threatening shadow over the lives of many fictional working-class characters⁽¹⁾, few novelists take their readers inside the workhouse. Exceptions to this generalization are Mark Rutherford in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane (1887), Dickens in Oliver Twist (1838-39) and Augustus Mayhew in Paved with Gold (1858). In this appendix I shall concentrate on Oliver Twist and Paved with Gold because they offer sustained and contrasting accounts of the experiences of workhouse boys.

-
- (1) Novels in which the threat of the workhouse plays a small but significant part include:
- (a) Michael Armstrong: The Factory Boy (1839-40) by Mrs. Frances Trollope. Michael Armstrong's mother is visited by the overseer, who threatens that no help will be forthcoming from the parish unless she goes into the workhouse; but she is unwilling to do so because she does not want to be separated from her children. Mrs. Armstrong is the embodiment of some of the book's ideals, in that she is devoted to her children and maintains a high standard of cleanliness.
 - (b) Dives and Lazarus (1858). William Gilbert describes the circumstances of a poor widow and imagines her probable fate. He points out that, if she went into the workhouse, it would be difficult for her to find a job afterwards because seeking help from the "union" was regarded as dishonourable.
 - (c) Our Mutual Friend (1864-65). Betty Higden's desire to avoid dying in the workhouse is presented by Dickens as one of the strengths of her character.
 - (d) Miss Grace of All Souls' (1895) by W.E. Tirebuck. Old people in the poverty-stricken mining village go into the workhouse to relieve the burden on younger members of the family, unless they are particularly fortunate like Dan, who is saved by Nance's thrift. Tirebuck presents this as one of the evil effects of a capitalist system whereby the workers are exploited.

Before comparing the attitudes of the two writers to their common subject, it is necessary to point out the limitations of scope which comparison offers. Twenty years elapsed between the publication of the two books; they are not concerned with identical aspects of the Poor Law system as it applies to workhouse life; and Dickens' idiom is satirical, whereas Mayhew seems to be aiming to provide a balanced impression.

As Humphry House points out in The Dickens World (1941), Dickens' portrayal of workhouse life includes elements of the system before and after the passing of the Poor Law Act of 1834. (This may reflect the overlapping which took place while the new provisions were being put into operation gradually). The main legislative weaknesses exposed by Dickens derived from the New Poor Law, from its economizing spirit and punitive approach to those compelled to seek relief in the workhouse. Dickens represents the gruel-dominated dietary as one manifestation of the inhumanly economizing spirit; and he describes with heavy sarcasm the punitive and Malthusian attitude reflected in the application of the less-eligibility principle:

...they (the board) established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they) of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. With this view, they contracted with the water-works to lay on an unlimited supply of water; and with a corn-factor to supply periodically small quantities of oatmeal; and issued three meals of thin gruel a day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sundays. They made a great many other wise and humane regulations having reference to the ladies, which it is not necessary

to repeat; kindly undertook to divorce poor married people, in consequence of the great expense of a suit in Doctors' Commons; and, instead of compelling a man to support his family, as they had theretofore done, took his family away from him, and made him a bachelor! (1)

The inadequacy of the provisions for the education and training of pauper children seems to have been the result of both legislative and administrative weaknesses. In the reigns of George III and William IV statutory provision was made for the care and education of pauper children⁽²⁾, but it was found necessary in 1848 to pass another law to facilitate their education and training.⁽³⁾ Oliver's being born in the workhouse is seen by Dickens as a calamity, the consequences of which he would never escape:

...he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once - a parish child - the orphan of a workhouse - the humble half-starved drudge - to be cuffed and buffeted through the world, - despised by all, and pitied by none. (4)

Dickens exemplifies this by showing Oliver deprived of an education and serving a meaningless apprenticeship to the undertaker, Mr. Sowerberry. However, the sentimental presentation of Oliver as a child who remains morally untouched by the inadequacies of his environment cancels out one of the most telling points in favour of measures of reform, the adverse effect on the behaviour and attitudes of the child or adolescent victim of the system.

(1) Dickens, Oliver Twist (London, 1838-39), ch.11.

(2) 7 Geo. 3, c. 39 and 4 and 5 Will. 4, c. 76.

(3) 11 and 12, Vict., c. 82.

(4) Dickens, op.cit., ch.1.

In his treatment of the maladministration of the law relating to paupers, Dickens pays particular attention to the corruption of officials. He does not present the abuse of office as a feature of the New Poor Law.⁽¹⁾ In the novel's first chapter, which must be set before 1834, Oliver is sent to a pauper baby farm under the surveillance of Mrs. Mann, who appropriates some of the funds for her own use, as does Mrs. Corney. Mr. Bumble is a monster of ignorance, hypocrisy and cruelty, who relishes the opportunity of administering a flogging. As Bumble was also an official under the old system, it is possible that Dickens is reflecting

-
- (1) Mark Rutherford in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane (London, 1887) also describes maladministration in workhouses before the advent of the provisions of the 1834 Poor Law:

...a workhouse then was not what it is now. Who can possibly describe what it was? Who can possibly convey to anybody who has not known what it was by actual imprisonment in it any adequate sense of its gloom; of the utter, callous, brutal indifference of the so-called nurses; of the neglect of the poor patients by those who were paid to attend to them. (Ch. xiv).

He points out that one reason for the abuses was that the master appointed the nurses and was accountable to no-one for his preferences. The most characteristic types of nurse were "the old, degraded, sodden, gin-drinking hags, who had all their lives breathed pauper air and pauper contamination; women with not one single vestige of their Maker's hand left upon them, and incapable, even under the greatest provocation, of any human emotion; who would see a dying mother call upon Christ, or cry for her husband and children, and would swear to her and try to smother her into silence." (Ch. xiv.)

the dilatoriness of the new law in replacing unsuitable officials. (1)

Dickens moves from the abstractions which represent what he saw as the essential features of the Poor Law system relating to workhouses - corruption, ignorance, hypocrisy, cruelty, parsimony - to the embodiment of these in the novel's characters. In Paved with Gold Mayhew describes in a realistic vein the physical characteristics, and the "feel" of life inside an imaginary workhouse in London, St. Lazarus Without. He communicates particularly well an impression of the physical surroundings, especially the barrack-like appearance of the building and the unmistakable smell:

...the House...was of the true parochial pattern, such as may be seen in almost any quarter of the metropolis. Had it not been for its high outer wall, it might have been mistaken for an hospital; but for its want of bars before the windows, it might have been supposed to be a prison: if it had only had a tall chimney-shaft, the stranger in London might have come to the conclusion that it was an extensive factory; or a couple of sentries in front of it, and a few pairs of regimental trousers drying outside the windows, would have convinced the visitor from a garrison town in the country that it was some barracks...

-
- (1) That physical punishment such as Bumble metes out to the children did take place in workhouses in the 1830s is supported by the evidence of C. Shaw's account of an incident in a Potteries workhouse, described in his autobiography When I was a Child (London, 1903), pp. 109 ff. Shaw sees the cruel flogging of a boy, whose only crime was to attempt to run away, as a manifestation of the harsh spirit fostered by Political Economy. Arnold Bennett uses Shaw's account of the workhouse flogging as the source of some of the details of Darius Clayhanger's visit to the workhouse in 1835. (Clayhanger, London, 1910, ch.v). Bennett represents Darius as particularly distressed that the flogging is carried out by authority and in public.

Across the yard was the big entrance-hall, where rows of black leathern fire-buckets dangled from the ceiling, as at an insurance office; and once within this, the true character of the building was made apparent to every sense. The nose could sniff pauperism in the smell of bread and gruel which pervaded the air. The eye read helplessness and poverty-stricken dependence in the crook-backed old figures, tottering about, as if palsied with weakness, in their suits of iron-grey; whilst the ear recognised the same tale in the mumbling, wheezy voices, the asthmatic coughs, and the occasional shouting of the hale officials into the ears of the (1) half-fatuous inmates...

Mayhew finds the air of the workhouse melancholy not because the institution is dominated by corrupt or cruel officials, but because misfortune has brought the inmates together and determined their mood. Because he is not writing in a satirical vein or as a propagandist, he concedes that the workhouse is not uniformly grim. The mothers' ward, for instance, is "a cleanly-looking, whitewashed room" with "a strong smell of babies and babies'-food pervading the place." (2) However, Mayhew implies that even the poorest homes outside the workhouse are preferable to the "House" itself because it represents degradation:

...as you were startled to see the mothers apparently settled down to the wretchedness of the Union, rather than being heart-broken with shame at the thought of being discovered in such a home, so you were shocked and pained to find the little ones laughing and playing with their workhouse toys, unconscious of (3) the degradation of their lot.

-
- (1) Augustus Mayhew, Paved with Gold (London, 1858), book 1, ch.1.
Rutherford also refers to the characteristic workhouse smell in his description of a workhouse in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, Ibid.
- (2) Mayhew, op.cit., book 1, ch.1.
- (3) Ibid., ch.1.

Philip Merton, like Oliver Twist, is illegitimate and starts life as a workhouse orphan, but the account of Philip's childhood does not constitute an indictment of the treatment of pauper children. He is sent to an industrial school, where one of the severest hardships he has to endure is not the result of inadequate legislation or its maladministration, but of his isolation from family and friends. Philip does not possess Oliver's incorruptibility, and the misfortunes he experiences in his eventful youth, after he has run away from the industrial school, cannot be directly ascribed to his starting life in a workhouse.

APPENDIX II

- (1) Extract from letter written by Charles Kingsley to Mrs. Fanny Kingsley on October 24th 1849 after his visit to Jacob's Island:

I was yesterday with George Walsh and Mansfield over the cholera districts of Bermondsey; and, oh, God! what I saw! people having no water to drink - hundreds of them - but the water of the common sewer which stagnated full of...dead fish, cats and dogs, under their windows. At the time the cholera was raging, Walsh saw them throwing untold horrors into the ditch, and then dipping out the water and drinking it!! (Ed. Mrs. Fanny Kingsley, Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of His Life, London, 1876), vol. I. Quotation from p. 216, tenth edition, 1878).

- (2) Description of Jacob's Island, Alton Locke, ch.xxxv.

The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene - along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch - over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping-sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave-lights - over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcasses of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth - over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma - the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death.

APPENDIX III

NOVELS OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA: SOCIALIST, CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST, CHARTIST

I have omitted from chapter VII a number of novels written to advocate a political cause furthering the interests of the working man - Socialism, Christian Socialism, Chartism. Unlike the novels discussed in chapter VII, those in the group to be considered in this brief appendix either do not give prominence to individual working men, or, if they do, use them in a purely propagandist way.

Socialist novels which I have not considered include William Morris's News from Nowhere (1890), which is utopian⁽¹⁾ and shows us the working man not as he is but as he might be in an ideal economic, political and social structure. Constance Howell's A More Excellent Way (1888), also a Socialist novel, is not utopian, but has as its protagonist a wealthy young man, Otho Hathaway, who finds in Socialism the political creed which helps him to overcome his sense of guilt at being in a privileged position in society. This sense is behind his remark:

"It is I, and such as I...who oppress you. We shirk the productive labour of the world and leave it all to you. You have been taught to consider yourselves dependent on us; it is untrue; it is you who support us, and we are your pensioners."⁽²⁾

-
- (1) I am using the word utopian of novels set in an ideal world, not of those which describe an ideal community, situated in but separate from contemporary actuality.
- (2) Constance Howell, A More Excellent Way (London, 1888), vol. II, ch.xi.
There are affinities between Hathaway's attitude and the late-nineteenth-century phenomenon of "slumming".

James Adderley also makes a middle-class socialist the protagonist of each of his two Christian Socialist novels, Stephen Remarx (1893) and Paul Mercer (1897). Paul Mercer comes from a family of nouveaux riches, and gives up his personal income to establish a community of work and worship.

In both of Adderley's novels and in A More Excellent Way the working classes are represented by a few recognizable stereotypes, used simply to give a concrete touch to a point in the fictional argument. The courteous, intelligent gas-fitter in A More Excellent Way surprises the free-thinking, conservative Dr. Hathaway into considering that he may be wrong in his assumption that there is a simple equivalence between social elevation on the one hand and the intellectual, social and moral virtues on the other. The unscrupulous sweater described by Father Bax in Paul Mercer is introduced merely to show how the profession of a belief in the maxim "God helps those who help themselves" may be a thin disguise for a selfish and uncompassionate pursuit of riches. One of the best examples of stereotyping in this group of novels is Adderley's creation of the character of the deputy's wife in Paul Mercer. She is socially placed by her clumsy and ungrammatical use of the relative pronoun:

"Bless yer 'art, lady. I've got my work to do; which as 'ow I can't get to a meeting on a Sunday, let alone week days, which as 'ow I read Mr. Spuggon's Metripolton Railway Pulpit every now and again." (1)

(1) James Adderley, Paul Mercer (London, 1897), ch.x.

I have omitted Chartist novels from chapter VII because of their oversimplified and biased presentation of the working man. Characterization is subordinated to political propaganda, and convincing presentation therefore subsumed to ideological demands. An illustration is provided by Thomas Frost's handling of the contentions issue of the use of physical force. In his novel The Secret (1850) discussion of the issue among Chartist working men takes place in an atmosphere of cool rationality; and the address of the chairman follows an incredibly neat, syllogistic pattern:

"In this country, and in all countries where there are privileged classes, the electors and the non-electors have necessarily different modes of procedure with regard to the legislature. To the former the constitution assigns the right of the suffrage, to the latter the right of petition. If the former class have a grievance which affects them as a body, its removal lies within their own power; but the latter class, though they have the double hostility of the profit-monger to contend with, can only petition. If, as must often be the case, that for which they petition is opposed, or appears to be opposed, to the interests of the electors, their prayers are received with derision, and scouted with contempt. The right of petition is therefore a mockery, as far as the unrepresented masses are concerned...I deplore the necessity, my friends, but I think with Sallust, that the war of freedom is better than the peace of slavery." (1)

It would be misleading to suggest that there is a qualitative difference between novels of the type specified in this appendix, and books such as Sybil and Alton Locke. Reference to some features of Alton Locke will, I hope,

(1) Thomas Frost, The Secret, first published as a serial in the National Instructor, 1850. Reprinted in part in An Anthology of Chartist Literature, edited by Y.V. Kovalev (Moscow, 1956). The quotation from ch.vii of The Secret is taken from this edition.

explain its relationship to the category of tendenz-romane. Kingsley's descriptions of St. Giles's and Clare Street market are heavily rhetorical pieces of writing, expressing revulsion from and pity for those inhabiting such environments. Such passages form part of an appeal to the middle class to act by instituting sanitary reforms:

Go, scented Belgravian! and see what London is!
and then go to the library which God has given
thee - one often fears in vain - and see what (1)
science says this London might be!

The many side-issues in Alton Locke are related, sometimes tenuously, to the two central political philosophies examined in the novel, Chartism and Christian Socialism. The conversion of Locke to the Chartist cause and, later, to Christian Socialism, serves the same purpose as secular conversions in A More Excellent Way and Paul Mercer: the protagonist's development is a means of persuasion, a rhetorical device; it ensures that the cause he embraces will have favourable consideration from the reader because it has been shown to appeal to someone established by the author as worthy of respect. In advocating Christian Socialism Kingsley employs other techniques found later in Adderley's proselytizing novels. There is a long exposition by Eleanor of the principles of Christian Socialism, similar to the uninterrupted passages of discussion and the speeches in the later Christian Socialist novels; and the glimpse of an ideal community of work and worship in Paul Mercer as reminiscent of the picture we are given of Eleanor's workroom run on the associative principles which Christian

(1) Kingsley, Alton Locke (London, 1850), ch.viii.

Socialists saw as the practical expression of their social and religious attitudes.

However, there is an overall difference of effect between Alton Locke and Sybil on the one hand and the purely Chartist, Socialist and Christian Socialist novels on the other. There is more observed reality in Kingsley's and Disraeli's novels. Although ideal solutions are offered, there is in both books a sense of strong social tensions with which any proffered solution must come to terms. There is richness of another kind to be found in both works, if only fitfully. Dandy Mick and Sandy Mackaye exist as people, not merely as devices for expressing attitudes; and there is in Alton Locke himself a study of a character whose political and class loyalties and personal ambitions create conflicts within him.

APPENDIX IVGREY GRANITE

The third book of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's trilogy A Scots Quair⁽¹⁾ is set in the imaginary Scottish city of Duncairn, and deals, from a Communist point of view, with the stage of advanced capitalism in industrial development. This is represented in the novel by the privately owned firm of smelters and steel manufacturers, Gowans and Gloag, who exploit their employees by dismissing them when they have completed apprenticeships and are therefore entitled to more pay. In this appendix I shall examine Gibbon's treatment of the industrial workers of Duncairn, using as my starting-point the attitudes of the Communist group, especially of Ewan Tavendale, whose commitment to the Communist cause is reached by a series of stages, in several of which he finds himself out of sympathy with the workers.

When Ewan begins work at Gowans and Gloag's his attitude to his fellow-workers is detached, even a little contemptuous:

Gowans had flourished just after the War, high wages and bonuses dished out to all, pay for the proletariats. Wonder what they did with the high money then? - Spent it on the usual keelie things, dogs and horse-racing and sleeping with whores, poor devils - it⁽²⁾ had nothing to do with him.

He is therefore isolated from the other apprentices, deriving satisfaction from the physical exertion involved in his work and from his study of metallurgy. Another significant stage

(1) Lewis Grassie Gibbon is the pseudonym of Leslie Mitchell. The trilogy A Scots Quair, published in 1946, includes Sunset Song and Cloud Howe.

(2) Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Grey Granite (London, 1934), section 1.

in Ewan's development is reached when he joins the battle between the unemployed and the police, without making a conscious choice:

...something took hold of him, whirled him about, (1)
shot him into the struggling column...

However, his involvement in the workers' cause is still at the level of instinctive response in certain critical situations. Reflection brings a feeling of dissatisfaction.

Oh, sick of the whole damn idiot mess, drifting about nowadays like a fool, couldn't settle to anything, couldn't read a book, caught in the net of this idiot rubbish. Your head had softened like a swede in the rain ever to be taken in with the rot - rot about leading new life to the workers, moulding them into History's new tool, apprehending a force more sure and certain than the God poor Robert had preached in Segget...In the workers? - Rats, what was there in them that wasn't in the people of any class? Some louts, some decent, the most of them brainless, what certain tool to be found in crude dirt? You'd dug deep enough to make sure of that, playing the game as a keelie yourself, fraternising with the fauna down at the Works - hell, how they stank, the unscrubbed lot, with their idiot ape-maunderings and idiot hopes, their idiot boasts, poor dirty devils. They took you for one of themselves nowadays, so you'd almost become as (2)
half-witted as they.

He returns to his collection of flints in the hope of finding some rest from social and personal problems, but he cannot escape: the image of conditions in Duncairn's slums blots out everything else. He warms again to the cause of the oppressed when he visits the museum and art gallery. He is dissatisfied with Greek art because it falsifies life, eliminating all that is ugly, including brutality and suffering.

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid., section ii. Robert is Ewan's stepfather.

He experiences a similar revulsion from Italian Renaissance art, and his mood is described as "that flaring savage sickness" which brings to the mind's eye "picture on picture limned in dried blood, never painted or hung in any gallery-pictures of the poor folk since history began, bedevilled and murdered, trodden underfoot, trodden down in the bree, a human slime, hungered, unfed, with their darkened brains, their silly revenges, their infantile hopes..."⁽¹⁾ His response is overwhelmingly emotional:

...anger bright as a clear bright flame, as though 'twas yourself that history had tortured, trodden on, spat on, clubbed down in you, as though you were every scream and each wound, flesh of your flesh, blood of your blood...And you gave a queer (2) sob that startled yourself.

It is only when he receives the cheers of the crowd at a sixpenny hop, after he has become active on behalf of his fellow-workers at Gowans and Gloag's, that Tavendale ceases to be disturbed by his instinctive revulsion from certain facets of the working-class character:

...it seemed to Ewan in a sudden minute that he would never be himself again, he'd never be ought but a bit of them, the flush on a thin white mill-girl's face, the arm and hand and the downbent face of a keelie from the reek of the Gallowgate, the blood and bones and flesh of them all, their thoughts and their doubts and their loves were his. And that Ewan Tavendale that had once been, the cool boy with the haughty soul and cool hands, apart and alone, self-reliant, self-centred, slipped away out of the room as he stared, slipped away and was lost from (3) his life forever.

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.,

When Tavendale has identified himself publicly with the Communist cause, he recognizes that he is playing a part in the unfolding of a historical process, and he and Jim Trease accept that the people for whom they are agitating may fail to honour their true leaders.⁽¹⁾ However, he is no longer disturbed by a sense of the cultural gap between himself and the "keelies":

...neither had a single illusion about the workers: they weren't heroes or gods oppressed, or likely to be generous and reasonable when their great black wave came flooding at last, up and up, swamping the high places with mud and blood. Most likely such leaders of the workers as themselves would be flung aside or trampled under, it didn't matter, nothing to them, **THEY THEMSELVES WERE THE WORKERS** and they'd no more protest than a man's fingers complain of a foolish muscle. (2)

The oscillations of Tavendale's attitudes to the workers illuminate a central problem faced by the radical from outside the working classes who is drawn to a political cause which gives the workers more power and influence. Gibbon writes a propagandist novel supporting the Communist cause without sentimentalizing the working classes. However, even though he exposes their political apathy and fickleness, their fecklessness and bestiality, he accords them as a group more dignity than the representatives of the bourgeois establishment: the workers are not presented through the crude political caricatures by means of which Gibbon portrays the

(1) The Communist leaders engage support for their protest marches when men have been put out of work by Gowans and Gloag's, but the support evaporates when men are taken on again because the firm starts making ammunition parts.

(2) Ibid., section iv.

middle-class institutions of Duncairn. The only policeman who is given an individual identity is Feet, stupid, authoritarian, a malevolent character who haunts Chris and her family in both country and city, and who is the instigator of the brutality with which Tavendale is treated after his "arranged" arrest. The Press, embodied in the ridiculous but unpleasant person of Piddle, is not an organ of truth but a rotten prop of the established order: after the unprovoked attack by the Police on the hunger-marchers, the Daily Runner "came out and told of those coarse brutes the Gowans strikers, and the awful things they'd done to the working folk that were coming decent-like from their jobs."⁽¹⁾ The education authorities are represented as narrow-minded and afraid when they try to interfere with Ellen's teaching and demand that she should either give up her job or sign a paper to say that she would take no more part in extremist activities. To the Church, represented by the Rev. Edward MacShilluck, Gibbon attributes gross hypocrisy: while condemning the activities of the Communists and publicly regretting the way in which the young are turning from "the Kirk and its sacred message, from purity and chastity, and clean-living,"⁽²⁾ he makes use of his housekeeper to satisfy his lecherous inclinations. Sexual aberration is also the weakness of the Provost, representing local govern-

(1) Ibid., section iii. In one of his most ponderously ironical comments, Gibbon refers to the Sunday Post which contained "the story of a lassie raped, bairned, killed and fried up in chips - Ay, fairly educative, the Scottish newspapers..." (Section iii)

(2) Ibid., section iv.

ment; and the Labour Party's failure to take a lead is epitomized by the sentimental inertia of Baillie Brown, whose response to the Police attack on the marchers is characteristically ineffectual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For the most part the list of fictional sources is restricted to fiction written before 1914; but a few later works which have been discussed in the text or appendices are also included. No attempt has been made to bring the list to any up-to-date completeness.

Where multiple editions of a work of fiction exist, I have indicated, after details of date and place of publication, which edition has been used as the source of quotations in the thesis. In the non-fiction sections of the Bibliography, the last edition to be specified in the bibliographical details was the edition used, either in its original form, or in a facsimile reprint.

A. FICTION: (1) NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

- ACKWORTH, J. Clock Shop Chronicles (London, 1896).
- ADCOCK, A.ST.J. East End Idylls (London, 1897). This
 includes the following stories:
- 'An Interrupted Romance', 'At the
Dock Gate', 'Bob Harris's Deputy',
'Helen of Bow', '"Salvation": His
Holy War', 'The Sermon That Was Not
Preached', 'The Soul of Penelope
Sanders', 'The Spectre of a Sin',
'The Street That Was Condemned',
'Tilly's Sister'.
- ADDERLEY, J. Paul Mercer (London, 1897).
- Stephen Remarx (London, 1893).
- BALFOUR, C.L. Scrub: or The Workhouse Boy's First Start
 (London, 1860).
- BARLEE, E. Locked Out (London, 1874).
- BARR, R. The Mutable Many (London, 1897).
- BENNETT, A. Clayhanger (London, 1910).

- BESANT, W. All Sorts and Conditions of Men (London, 1892).
Children of Gibeon (London, 1886).
- BRAYSHAW, J.D. Slum Silhouettes (London, 1898). This collection includes the following stories:
 'A Bad Match and a Flare-up', 'Bessie's Burfdlay', 'The Death Hunter', 'Hooligan's Wake', 'Lost for Love', 'The Nipper', 'Only a Loafer', 'The Snide Pitcher', 'Dicky Notton's Top Floor', 'Too Clever by Half'.
- BRIERLEY, W. Means Test Man (London, 1935).
- BRONTË, C. Shirley (London, 1849).
- BUTLER, S. The Way of All Flesh (London, 1903).
 Edited by R. D. Streatfeild). Dent.
- CROCKETT, S.R. Cleg Kelly: Arab of the City (London, 1896).
- DICKENS, C. Bleak House (First Published in 20 monthly parts, March 1852-September 1853). Published as a book, London, 1853). Penguin English Library.
David Copperfield (Monthly, May 1849-November 1850. London, 1850).
Dombey and Son (Monthly, October 1846-April 1848. London, 1848).
Great Expectations (Weekly, All the Year Round, 1 December 1860-3 August 1861. New York, 1860; London, 1861).
Hard Times (Weekly, Household Words, 1 April-12 August, 1854. London, 1854). Penguin English Library.
Little Dorrit (Monthly, December 1855-June 1857. London, 1857). Penguin English Library.
The Old Curiosity Shop (Weekly, 25 April, 1840-6 February, 1841. London, 1841). Penguin English Library.

- DICKENS, C. Oliver Twist (Monthly, Bentley's Miscellany, February 1837-April 1839), except for June and October, 1837, and September, 1838. London, 1839). Penguin English Library.
- Our Mutual Friend (Monthly, May, 1864-November, 1865. London, 1865). Penguin English Library.
- DISRAELI, B. Coningsby (London, 1844).
- Sybil (London, 1845). Oxford: The World's Classics.
- ELIOT, G. Felix Holt the Radical (London and Edinburgh, 1866).
- FROST, T. The Secret (First published in parts in the National Instructor, 1850). An Anthology of Chartist Literature, edited by Y.V. Kovalev (Moscow, 1956).
- GASKELL, MRS.E. 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras', Life in Manchester (London, 1867).
- 'Lizzie Leigh' (Weekly, Household Words, 30 March-13 April 1850. Lizzie Leigh and Other Tales, London, 1855).
- Mary Barton (London, 1848). Penguin English Library.
- North and South (Weekly, Household Words, 2 September, 1854-27 January, 1855. London, 1855). Penguin English Library.
- Ruth (London, 1853). Vol. I of Novels and Tales by Mrs. Gaskell, 1857.
- GIBBON, L.G. Grey Granite (London, 1934).
- GILBERT, W. De Profundis (London, 1864).
- Dives and Lazarus (London, 1858).

- GISSING, G. Demos (London, 1886). Harvester Press.
 A Life's Morning (London, 1888).
 'Lou and Liz' (First published in the English Illustrated Magazine, August 1893.
 Reprinted in A Victim of Circumstance,
 London, 1927). Working Class Stories
 of the 1890s, edited by P.J. Keating,
 London, 1971.
 The Nether World (London, 1889). Dent.
 Thyrza (London, 1887). Ams Press.
 The Unclassed (London, 1884). Ams Press.
 Workers in the Dawn (London, 1880). Ams
 Press.
- GOULD, S.B. Nebo the Nailer (London, 1902).
- GREENWOOD, J. Fair Phyllis of Lavender Wharf (Bristol,
 1890).
 Jerry Jacksmith of Lower London (London,
 1890).
 The True History of a Little Ragamuffin
 (London, 1866).
- GREENWOOD, W. Love on the Dole (London, 1933).
- HOCKING, J. The Madness of David Baring (London, 1900).
- HOCKING, S.K. Her Benny (London, 1879).
- HOWELL, C. A More Excellent Way (London, 1888).
- JAMES, H. The Princess Casamassima (First published
 monthly in the Atlantic Monthly,
 September, 1855-October, 1886. London,
 1886). John Lehmann.
- JENKINS, J.E. Ginx's Baby (London, 1870).
- JONES, E. Woman's Wrongs (London, 1855). An Antho-
 logy of Chartist Literature.

LAWRENCE, D.H.

The Prussian Officer (Cont.)

'A Sick Collier' (First published in the New Statesman, 13 September, 1913).
'The Thorn in the Flesh' (First published in the English Review as 'Vin Ordinaire'.
'The White Stocking' (First published in The Smart Set, October 1914).

The Rainbow (London, 1915. Revised, 1926).
Penguin.

Sons and Lovers (London, 1913).

'Sun' (First published in New Coterie,
Autumn, 1926. First unexpurgated
edition, Paris, 1928.) Penguin,

The Princess and Other Stories

MARTINEAU, H.

'A Manchester Strike', Illustrations of Political Economy (London, 1832-34). Fact into Fiction, edited by Ivanka Kovacevic (Leicester, 1975).

MASTERS, C.

The Shuttle of Fate (London, 1875).

MAUGHAM, W.S.

Liza of Lambeth, (London, 1897). Penguin.

MAYHEW, A.

Paved With Gold (London, 1858).

MOORE, G.

A Mummer's Wife (London, 1855).

MORDAUNT, E.

Bellamy (London, 1914).

MORRIS, W.

News from Nowhere (First published in the
Commonwealth, 11 January-4 October 1890.
Boston, 1890. London, 1891).

MORRISON, A.

A Child of the Jago (London, 1896).

The Hole in the Wall (London, 1902).

Tales of Mean Streets (London, 1894). This collection includes the following stories:

'Behind the Shade', 'A Conversion',
(In Business', 'Lizerunt' (first published
in part in the National Observer, 22 July
1893; the complete version first appeared
in Tales of Mean Streets), 'On the Stairs',
'A Poor Stick', 'The Red Cow Group',

- MORRISON, A. Tales of Mean Streets (Cont.)
 'Squire Napper', 'A Street' (first published in Macmillan's Magazine, October, 1891; reprinted with some alterations as the introduction to Tales of Mean Streets), 'That Brute Simmons', 'Three Rounds', 'Without Visible Means'.
- MURRAY, D.C. A Life's Atonement (London, 1880).
- NEVINSON, H. Neighbours of Ours (Bristol, 1895). This collection includes the following stories:
 'Sissero's Return.'
 'The St. George of Rochester'.
Working Class Stories of the 1890s
- PUGH, E. Mother-Sister (London, 1900).
A Street in Suburbia (London, 1895).
 This collection includes the following stories:
 'The First and Last Meeting of the M.S.H.D.S.'
 'A Small Talk Exchange'.
- READE, C. Put Yourself in His Place (Cornhill Magazine, March 1869-July 1870. London, 1870). Beacon edition.
- REYNOLDS, G.M.W. The Mysteries of London (First and second series, 6 vols, London, 1846-50).
- RIDGE, W.P. Erb (London, 1903).
Mrs. Galer's Business (London, 1895).
Next Door Neighbours (London, 1904). This collection includes the following stories:
 ✓ 'Duffers', 'A Fair Start', 'Great ✓
 Happenings', 'The One Meal', 'The Party',
 'Pleasant Place', 'A Riverside Garden',
 'Sunday Morning', 'Visitors from Town'.

- RIDGE W.P. Outside the Radius (London, 1899).
Up Side Streets (London, 1903). This collection includes the following stories: 'An Aristocratic Day', 'First Day Out', 'First Fruits', 'Independence Day', 'Life in Kaysses', 'Mr. and Mrs. Ranger', 'The Return of Marjory'.
- Mord Em'ly (London, 1898).
- RILEY, W. Windyridge (London, 1913).
- ROBINSON, F.W. Lazarus in London (London, 1964).
Mattie, a Stray (London, 1964).
- ROOK, C. The Hooligan Nights (London, 1899). This collection includes the following stories: 'Billy the Snide', 'Concerning Hooligans', 'Young Alf'.
- RUTHERFORD, M. The Revolution in Tanner's Lane (London, 1887).
- SILLITOE, A. Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (London, 1958).
- TIREBUCK, W.E. Dorrie (London, 1891).
Mis~~s~~ Grace of All Souls' (London, 1895).
- TONNA, MRS. C.E. Helen Fleetwood (London, 1841).
- TROLLOPE, MRS. F. Michael Armstrong the Factory Boy (Monthly, 1839-40. London, 1840).
- TRESSELL, R. The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (London, 1914: edited and abridged by Jessie Pope. London, 1955: full text, edited by F.C. Ball).
- WHITEING, R. No. 5 John Street (London, 1899).
- WOOD, MRS. H. Danesbury House (Glasgow, 1860).

(ii) POETRY

TENNYSON, A. Idylls of the King (London, 1859)
The Princess: A Medley (London, 1847;
 revised, 1850).

THOMSON, J. ('B.V.') City of Dreadful Night (First published
 in the National Reformer, March-May 1874)

B. NON-FICTION (i) BOOKS(a) PRIMARY MATERIAL

- The Annual Register 1938
- ACTON, W. Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social
 and Sanitary Aspects (London, 1857; second
 edition, 1870).
- ADDERLEY, J. The Parson in Socialism (Leeds and London,
 1910).
- ADSHEAD, J. Distress in Manchester: Evidence of the
 State of the Labouring Classes in 1840-1842
 (London, 1842).
- ARNOLD, M. Culture and Anarchy (London, 1869; revised
 1875 and 1882).
- BEAMES, T. The Rookeries of London (London, 1850; second
 edition, 1852).
- BOOTH, C. Life and Labour of the People, first edition,
 vol. I (London and Edinburgh, 1889).
Life and Labour of the People in London,
 third edition (London and New York, 1902-3),
Final Volume: Notes on Social Influences
 and Conclusion.
- BOOTH, W. In Darkest England and the Way Out (London,
 1890).
- BROWN, J. Original Biography-Memoir of Robert Blincoe
(The Lion - January-December 1829).

- CARLYLE, T. 'Chartism', Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. IV (London, 1839).
Past and Present (Boston, 1843, London, 1845).
'Shooting Niagara: and after?' (Macmillan's Magazine, August, 1867).
'Signs of the Times' (Edinburgh Review LXIX, 1829).
- CHADWICK, E. Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain (London, 1842, 1843).
- CHANCELLOR, E. Master and Artisan in Victorian England (Ed.) (London, 1969).
- COLE, G.D.H. and British Working Class Movements, Select FILSON, A.W. Documents 1789-1875 (London, 1951).
- COOPER, T. The Life of Thomas Cooper (London, 1872).
- CRABTREE, G. A Brief Description of a Tour through Calder Dale, being a letter to Richard Oastler (Huddersfield, 1833).
- DODD, W. The Factory System Illustrated (London, 1842).
'East End Vicar', Episodes in an Obscure Life (London, 1871).
- ELIOT, G. 'Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt' (First published in Blackwood's Magazine, January 1868; reprinted in Essays and Leaves from a Notebook, London, and Edinburgh, 1884).
- ENGELS, F. The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1884 (London, 1892. First published in Leipzig in 1845 as Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England. English translation, which added the phrase 'in 1844' to the title, published in New York in 1887, and in London in 1892).
- GASKELL, MRS. E. Mrs. Gaskell's Letters, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and A. Pollard (Manchester, 1966).

- GASKELL, P. The Manufacturing Population of England (London, 1833).
- GAMMAGE, R. History of the Chartist Movement 1837-1854 (London, 1854; revised, 1894).
- GAVIN, H. Sanitary Ramblings (London, 1848).
- GISSING, G. Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family, edited by A. and E. Gissing (London, 1927).
- Letters by George Gissing to Eduard Bertz, edited by A.C. Young (London, 1961).
- GREENWOOD, J. 'A Night in the Workhouse' (Pall Mall Gazette, 1866).
- The Wilds of London (London, 1874).
- HILL, O. Homes of the London Poor (London, 1875; second edition, 1883).
- JAY, J.O. Life in Darkest London (London, 1891).
- The Social Problem and Its Possible Solution (London, 1895).
- The Story of Shoreditch (London, 1896).
- KAY, J.P. The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester (London, 1832; second edition, 1834).
- LAWRENCE, D.H. Phoenix, edited by E.D. McDonald (London and New York, 1936).
- Phoenix II, edited by W. Roberts and H.T. Moore (London, 1968).

- LONDON, J. The People of the Abyss (London, 1913).
- LOVE, B. The Handbook of Manchester (Manchester, 1842).
- LOVETT, W. The Life and Struggles of William Lovett (London, 1876; reprinted 1967, without last three chapters of original edition).
- MARX, K. and ENGELS, F. The Communist Manifesto (Authorized English English translation, London, 1888).
- MAYHEW, H. London Labour and the London Poor (Vol. I and parts of Vols. II and III, London, 1851; four vols. 1861-62).
- MEARNS, A. and PRESTON, W.C. The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (London, 1883).
- MILL, J.S. Autobiography (London, 1873).
- Principles of Political Economy (London, 1848).
- Utilitarianism (London, 1863; revised, 1871).
- ORWELL, G. The Road to Wigan Pier (London, 1937).
- 'The Spike' (First published in the Adelphi, April, 1931; reprinted in Vol. I of The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, London, 1968; reduced and re-shaped to form chapters xxvii and xxxv of Down and Out in Paris and London, London and New York, 1933).
- OWEN, R. A New View of Society and Other Writings (London, 1927).
- PALMER, R. (Ed.) A Touch on the Times (Harmondsworth, 1974).

PARLIAMENTARY
PAPERS

- Trades Unions Commission: Sheffield Outrages Inquiry. Report and Minutes of Evidence (London, 1867).
- First Report of a Select Committee of The House of Lords on the Sweating System (London, Edinburgh and Dublin, 1888).
- PIKE, R. (Ed.) Human Documents of the Industrial Revolution in Britain (London, 1966).
- PUGH, E. Harry the Cockney (London, 1913).
- ROBERTS, R. The Classic Slum (Manchester, 1971).
- RUSKIN, J. Sesame and Lilies (London, 1865).
- 'Unto this Last' (First published in the Cornhill Magazine, August-November 1860. London, 1862).
- SHAW, S.
('An Old Potter') When I was a Child (London, 1903).
- SIMS, G. How the Poor Live and Horrible London (London, 1889).
- SMILES, S. Self-Help (London, 1859).
- URE, A. The Philosophy of Manufactures (London, 1835).
- WEBB, B. My Apprenticeship (London, 1926).
- WRIGHT, T.
('A Journeyman Engineer') Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes (London, 1867).
- YOUNG, G.M. and
HANCOCK, W.D. English Historical Documents XII(I),
edited by G.M. Young and W.D. Hancock
(London, 1956).

(b) SECONDARY SOURCES1. LITERARY CRITICISM

- ALTICK, R. The English Common Reader (Chicago, 1957).
- BOOTH, W. The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago and London, 1961).
- BUCKLEY, J.H. The Victorian Temper (Cambridge, Mass., 1951).
- BURNS, W. Charles Reade: A Study in Victorian Authorship (New York, 1961).
- CAZAMIAN, D. Le Roman Social en Angleterre, 1830-1850 (Paris, 1904).
- DALESKI, H.M. The Forked Flame (London, 1965).
- FABER, R. Proper Stations (London, 1971).
- FINDLATER, J. 'The Slum Movement in Fiction' from Stones from a Glass House (London, 1904).
- GISSING, G. Charles Dickens: A Critical Study (London, 1898).
- GOMME, A.H. Dickens (London, 1971).
- GOSSE, E. 'The Limits of Realism in Fiction' in Questions at Issue (London, 1893).
- HENKIN, L.J. Darwinism in the English Novel, 1860-1910 (New York, 1940).

- HOUGHTON, W. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870
(New Haven, 1957).
- HOUSE, H. The Dickens World (London, 1941).
- HOWARD, D.,
LUCAS, J., AND
GOOD, J. Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth
Century Fiction (London, 1966).
- JAMES, H. The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by
Henry James, edited by R.P. Blackmur
(New York, 1934).
- The Future of the Novel: Essays on the
Art of Fiction, edited by L. Edel (New
York, 1956).
- JAMES, L. Fiction for the Working Man (Oxford, 1965).
- KEATING, P.J. The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction
(London, 1971).
- KENDALL, G. Charles Kingsley and His Ideas (London, 1946).
- KILLHAM, J. Tennyson and 'The Princess' (London, 1958).
- KORG, J. George Gissing: A Critical Biography
(Seattle, 1963).
- LEAVIS, F.R. &
LEAVIS, Q.D. Dickens the Novelist (London, 1970)
- LEAVIS, F.R. The Great Tradition (London, 1948).
D.H. Lawrence, Novelist (London, 1955).
- LODGE, D. The Language of Fiction (London, 1966)
- LUCAS, J. (ed.) Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth
Century (London, 1971).
- MANDER, J. The Writer and Commitment (London, 1961).

- MARTIN, R.D. The Dust of Combat: A Life of Charles Kingsley (London, 1959).
- ORWELL, G. 'Charles Dickens', Critical Essays (London, 1946).
- PARIS, B. Experiments in Life (Detroit, 1965).
- SAGAR, K. The Art of D.H. Lawrence (Cambridge, 1966).
- STANG, R. The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870 (London, 1959).
- THOMSON, P. The Victorian Heroine: A Changing Ideal, 1837-1873 (Oxford, 1956).
- TILLOTSON, K. Novels of the 1840s (Oxford, 1954).
- WALKER, I. James Thomson ('B.V.') A Critical Study (New York, 1950).
- WILLIAMS, R. The Country and the City (London, 1973).
Culture and Society (London, 1958).
The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (London, 1970)
The Long Revolution (London, 1961).
- WRIGHT, E. Mrs. Gaskell: The Basis for Re-Assessment (London, 1965).

2. HISTORY

- ADELMANN, P. The Rise of the Labour Party, 1880-1945 (London, 1973).
- BEST, G. Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-75 (London, 1871).
Shaftesbury (London, 1964).
- BRIGGS, A. (Ed.) Chartist Studies (London, 1959).
- BRIGGS, A. and SAVILLE, J. (Editors) Essays in Labour History (London, 1960; revised, 1967).
- BRIGGS, A. Victorian Cities (London, 1963).
Victorian People (London, 1954).
- BRUCE, M. The Coming of the Welfare State (London, 1961; fourth edition, 1968).
- BURN, W.L. The Age of Equipoise (London, 1964).
- CHESNEY, K. The Victorian Underworld (London, 1970).
- CLEGG, H.A., FOX, A. and THOMPSON, A.F. A History of British Trade Unions Since 1889 (Oxford, 1964).
- COLE, G.D.H. and POSTGATE, R. The Common People, 1746-1946 (London, 1938; second edition, 1946).
- HAMMOND, J.L. and HAMMOND, B. The Town Labourer, 1760-1832 (London, 1917; second edition, 1925).
- HARRISON, B. Drink and the Victorians (London, 1971).
- HARRISON, J.F.C. The Early Victorians, 1832-1851 (London, 1971).
Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America (London, 1969).
- HEWITT, M. Wives and Mothers in Victorian Industry (London, 1958).
- HIMMELFARB, G. Victorian Minds (London, 1968).
- HOBSBAWM, E.J. and RUDE, G. Captain Swing (London, 1969).

- HOGGART, R. The Uses of Literacy (London, 1957).
- HOVELL, M. The Chartist Movement (Manchester, 1918; second edition 1925; third edition 1966).
- GRISEWOOD, H.,
Ed. Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians. An Revaluation of the Victorian Age. (London, 1949. A series of talks given on the B.B.C. Third Programme, 1948).
- INGLIS, B. Poverty and the Industrial Revolution (London, 1971).
- JONES, G.S. Outcast London (Oxford, 1971).
- McGREGOR, O.R. Divorce in England (London, 1957).
- MATHER, F.C. Chartism (London, 1965).
- MIDWINTER, E. Victorian Social Reform (London, 1968).
- MONYPENNY, W.F.
and BUCKLE, G.E. Disraeli (London, 1910; revised, in two volumes, 1929).
- NEFF, W. Victorian Working Women (New York, 1929).
- PELLING, M. A History of British Trade Unionism (London, 1963).
- PERKIN, H. The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880 (London, 1969).

- PINCHBECK, I. Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850 (London, 1930).
- RAVEN, C.E. Christian Socialism, 1848-1954 (London, 1920).
- RECKITT, M.B. Maurice to Temple (London, 1947).
- REDFORD, A. Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850 (Manchester, 1926; second edition, 1964).
- ROWE, J.H.F. Wages in the Coal Industry (London, 1923).
- TARN, J.N. Five Per Cent Philanthropy (Cambridge, 1973).
- TAYLOR, A.J.P. English History, 1914-1945 (Oxford, 1965).
- THOMPSON, D. England in the Nineteenth Century 1815-1914 (London, 1964).
- THOMPSON, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1963).
- WARD, J.T. The Factory Movement, 1830-1855 (London, 1962).
- WEBB, B., and WEBB, S. The History of Trade Unionism (London, 1926).
- WILLMOTT, P. and YOUNG, M. Family and Kinship in East London (London, 1957).

ARTICLES

ANONYMOUS ARTICLES

- 'Alton Locke', Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine LXVIII (November, 1850).
- 'The Works of Mrs. Gaskell', British Quarterly Review, XLV (April, 1867).
- 'Mary Barton', Edinburgh Review LXXXIX (1849).

- ALLEN, P. 'F.D. Maurice and J.M. Ludlow: A Re-Assessment of the Leaders of Christian Socialism', Victorian Studies (June 1968).
- BACKSTROM, P. 'The Practical Side of Christian Socialism in Victorian England', Victorian Studies (June, 1963).
- BRANTLINGER, P. 'The Case Against Trade Unions in Early Victorian Fiction', Victorian Studies (September 1969).
- BROSE, O. 'Maurice and the Victorian Crisis of Belief', Victorian Studies (March 1960).
- CARNALL, G. 'Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Preston Strike', Victorian Studies (September, 1964).
- CARROLL, D. 'Felix Holt: Society as Protagonist', Nineteenth Century Fiction XVII (1962).
- CHALONER, W.H. 'Mrs. Trollope and the Early Factory System', Victorian Studies (December 1960).
- CROSS, R. 'Homes of the Poor', the Nineteenth Century (August 1882).
 'Homes of the Poor in London', the Nineteenth Century (August, 1882).
 'Housing the Poor', the Nineteenth Century (June, 1885).
- DICKENS, C. 'On Strike', Household Words VIII (11 February, 1854).
 'Railway Strikes', Household Words II (11 January 1851).
- DYOS, H.J. 'The Slums of Victorian London', Victorian Studies (September, 1967).
- FIELDEN, K. 'Samuel Smiles and Self-Help', Victorian Studies (December, 1968).
- GOODE, J. 'Gissing, Morris and English Socialism', Victorian Studies (December, 1968).
- GOODE, J. and LELCHUK, A. 'Gissing's Demos', Victorian Studies (June 1969).

- HARRISON, B. 'Philanthropy and the Victorians', Victorian Studies (June 1966).
- HARRISON, B. and HOLLIS, P. 'Chartism, Liberalism and the Life of Robert Lowery', English Historical Review (July, 1967).
- KOVACEVIC, I. and KANNER, B. 'Blue Book Into Novel: The Forgotten Industrial Fiction of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna', Nineteenth Century Fiction XXV (September, 1970).
- KOVALEY, Y.V. 'The Literature of Chartism', Victorian Studies (December, 1958).
- LEVINE, G. 'Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot', PMLA LXXVII (1962).
- ROBERTS, D. 'Jeremy Bentham and the Victorian Administrative State', Victorian Studies (March, 1959).
- SMITH, S.M. 'Willenhall and Wodgate: Disraeli's Use of Blue Book Evidence', Review of English Studies, New Series, vol. XIII, no. 52 (1962).
- TARN, J.N. 'The Peabody Donation Fund: The Role of a Housing Society in the Nineteenth Century', Victorian Studies (September, 1966).
- THOMSON, F.C. 'Felix Holt as Classical Tragedy', Nineteenth Century Fiction XVI (1961).